

ONE  
HUNDRED and TWENTY  
POPULAR  
SERMONS,  
By PHILIP PYLE, M. A.  
RECTOR of CASTLE RISING, *K*  
AND  
LYNN St. EDMUND, in NORFOLK.  
AND  
EDITOR of his FATHER'S  
SERMONS.

---

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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NORWICH:

Printed for the AUTHOR, by R. BEATNIFF.

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9/4/46

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Printed for the AUTHOR, by R. BARNARD, 11, DECEMBER, 1846.

2/4/46  
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THE RIGHT HONORABLE,  
GEORGE Earl of ORFORD,  
PRESIDENT;

ROBERT FELLOWS, Esq. *Treasurer*;  
and the rest of the GOVERNORS of  
the Norfolk and Norwich Hos-  
PITAL.

*My Lord, and Gentlemen,*

SEVERAL Persons having ex-  
pressed a wish, that the following  
Discourses might be preserved, by  
being committed to the press; I beg  
you will accept the Profits, arising  
from the Publication of them, as a  
Benefaction to the Charity you so  
generously Patronize.

I think it incumbent upon me to  
declare,

iv DEDICATION.

declare, that those to which an Asterisk is prefixed, were originally written by my late Father; the rest of whose Sermons, that have come into my hands, are already printed in three volumes octavo, and have passed through Three Editions.

My earnest desire is, that you may judge these Papers calculated to promote Religion at large; and consequently every good work, whether of a public or private nature.

I am,

My LORD,

and GENTLEMEN,

your very respectful Servant,

7 DE61

NORWICH,

PHILIP PYLE.

MAY 5, 1788.

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SERMON

## S E R M O N I.

J O B xxxi. \* 15.

*Did not he that made me in the womb, make  
him?*

**T**HE words which I have chosen for my Text, contain in a very short compass, a lesson of excellent instruction, and of great concern to us all. My design, therefore, is,

I. To give you a brief account of the occasion, upon which they were originally spoken.

II. To illustrate and establish the doctrine they deliver. After having done this, I shall,

III. Apply them at large to ourselves; to the promotion of Christian piety and virtue amongst us.

I, then. The chapter from whence the words are taken, is part of a long conversa-

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tion

tion between Job and his friends, concerning the cause of his present unexpected afflictions. Which afflictions they supposed, to be a Divine judgment upon him; in consequence of some grievous, though secret crimes, he had formerly committed. Job, on the other hand, utterly denies the charge, and strenuously asserts his innocence. He declares, that, 'For whatever reason God was pleased to send these calamities upon him; they could not be sent as a punishment for his sins: because the general course of his life, had been upright and pure; without a single instance of heinous offence, either against God, or against Man.'

"Let me be weighed," says he, "in an even balance, that God may know my integrity! If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit; if my step hath turned out of the way, or if any blot hath cleaved to my hands; then let me sow, and let another reap: yea, let my offspring be rooted out!" Thus, again, "If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; if I have eaten my morsel

# S E R M O N I. 3

" morfel alone, and the fatherlefs hath not  
 " eaten with me; if I have feen any perifh  
 " for want of clothing, or have lifted up  
 " my hand againft the fatherlefs; then let  
 " my arm fall from my foulder-blade, let  
 " it be broken from the bone!" Laftly,  
 " If I have defpifed the caufe of my man-  
 " fervant, or of my maid-fervant, when  
 " they contended with me; what fhall I  
 " do, when God rifeth up: and when he  
 " vifiteth, what fhall I answer him!" Then  
 come the words of the text: " Did not He  
 " that made Me, make Him?" (Or, ac-  
 cording to the Septuagint, Did not He that  
 made Me, make Them?) " Did not one  
 " God fafhion us in the womb?"

II. Now, leaving the particular occafion,  
 which gave rife to thefe pathetic words;  
 the general doctrine conveyed to us in  
 them, is manifefly this. That ' Both high  
 ' and low; rich and poor; mafters and fer-  
 ' vants; all ranks, in fhort, all conditions  
 ' of men; have one common Creator and  
 ' Governor, one common God and Father;  
 ' to whom they are all equally indebted for  
 ' their being, and for the extenfive bleffings  
 ' of his providence.'



The truth of which capital article of our belief, does not rest solely upon the word of Job, or upon the authority of Scripture; though that alone might be abundantly sufficient; but is obvious to original reason, and is confirmed by all the discoveries which have been gradually made, in natural and philosophical knowledge.

Indeed, that men cannot possibly be the authors of their own existence; that we cannot possibly give life to ourselves, or to any other the most insignificant animal, when we cannot add half an inch to our stature, nor make a hair of our heads white or black; is self-evident, and disdains all formal proof. The inference from it, is no less evident: that, consequently, we received our being, with every faculty of body and mind, from that great Superior, who, though invisible to our sight, may clearly be seen by our understanding; may be beheld, throughout all his works, in every part of his creation.

If any man, therefore, wishes to see his Maker, let him only lift up his eyes to heaven; and he will there see him, in the noblest sense. He will there have ocular demonstration

monstration of what the Psalmist told us long ago; that "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work."

Moreover. That this same Supreme Power, produced into being, not the race of mankind alone, but all the inhabitants of the celestial regions, all the inferior creatures that live with us upon earth; is equally certain in itself, and equally taught in the scriptures. "By the word of the Lord," say these scriptures, "were the heavens made; and all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth." So, again. "God made the beast of the earth, after his kind; cattle, after their kind; and every thing which creepeth upon the earth, after his kind." This last remark, that 'God is the Creator of what we call the brutes, as well as of men;' may appear to you at present, as having no immediate connection with the text. But you will find some considerable use made of it, afterwards.

Once more. That God not barely created man, with all the lower animals about him; but has most amply provided for the

present subsistence of us and them, as also for the continuance of all the different kinds, in a constant succession from age to age; are facts, known by universal experience: indisputably proving, to every grateful mind, the goodness as well as power, of the gracious Father and Creator.

With what rapture has the Psalmist expressed his sense of this bountiful providence! "O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches: so is the great and wide sea also, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season."

The abundance of grain, of herbs, and fruits; the infinitely various sorts of food, which the land and the waters uniformly bring forth, for the maintenance of all the sundry inhabitants with which God has furnished them, demonstrate that the above-cited words of the Royal Prophet, are not the overflowings of a luxuriant fancy, but are founded in truth and nature.

To

To finish this head. Though for the knowledge we at present enjoy, of the Creator, of his works and perfections, we are confessedly much beholden to the progress of arts and science, as well as to the assistance of divine revelation; yet that 'there is' 'some All-ruling Power, which conducts' 'this vast and visible scene of things,' is a doctrine, which has ever been received, ever been avowed, by all civilized nations. The impudence of atheists, who pretend to maintain, that 'all things go on, from' 'generation to generation, by a stupid fatality, without cause, without design;' or, which is even more absurd still, that 'men, and other feeble short-lived creatures, create themselves, or create one another;' This impudent folly, I say, has always been exploded, with the contempt, it justly deserves.

If you ask, 'What could lead men into' 'a notion, so consummately ridiculous, so' 'injurious to society;' the only answer I can give is, 'Ignorance; self-conceit; the' 'love of appearing singular; the insolent' 'affectation of despising what others hold in' 'veneration.' How infinitely more rational;



## 8                    S E R M O N   I.

how full of humility, of manly sense and wisdom; are the words of David: where he thus addresses his Maker. "Lord, I  
" will praise thee. For I am fearfully and  
" wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy  
" works: and that my soul knoweth right  
" well."

There is something, in this reflection of the Psalmist, so extremely natural; that whoever bestows a thought upon his own person, or upon the exquisite art with which the bodies of all other animals are formed, and fitted exactly to the life for which providence designed them, from the huge leviathan to the smallest insect; in fine, whoever pays any attention, either to what he sees without him, or to what he feels within him, finds the same ideas, nay even the same words, necessarily rise in his mind, whether he will or no. "I will praise  
" thee, O Lord, for I am fearfully and  
" wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy  
" works: and that my soul knoweth right  
" well."

Thus much being said, to explain and justify the text; let us now,

III.

III. Inquire what religious or moral instruction, may be drawn from it. Which head I shall divide into two parts: Shewing you, First, What the text teaches us, concerning our duty towards God himself, and all the superior orders of our fellow-creatures: Secondly, How it directs us to behave towards each other; and the creatures that are inferior, or subject, to us.

I. Then, with respect to God. If all that we have, whether in possession or in prospect, must come from him; it follows, that our highest obligations must be to him; that our highest regards are due to him. As our Supreme Benefactor and Governor, he has the first claim upon us, for every return of submission and gratitude, we can possibly make him. Our first duty, as his rational creatures, must be, to acknowledge our dependence upon him; to manifest our sense of his authority over us, by every act and instance within our power.

This affection of mind, therefore, respecting our Creator, in common language called piety, but in scripture the love of God,

God, is the basis, the ground-work, of religion; and is pronounced to be so, by our blessed Savior; who, when asked by one of the subtle Jewish doctors, Which he reckoned the grand commandment in the Mosaic law, answers directly and explicitly, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is  
 "one Lord. And thou shalt love the  
 "Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with  
 "all thy soul. This is the first and great  
 "commandment."

The part of religious duty about which I am now speaking, and which we owe immediately to God himself, cannot be better described, nor more properly expressed, than it is in the catechism of our church, where we are instructed, that "our duty  
 "towards God, is to believe in him; to  
 "fear him; and to love him with all our  
 "mind, with all our strength; to wor-  
 "ship him; to give him thanks; to put  
 "our whole trust in him; to call upon  
 "him; to honour his holy name, and his  
 "word; to serve him truly, all the days  
 "of our life."

These words are a lesson, usually delivered to young persons only: though they exceed-  
 ingly

ingly merit the attention of people of all ages, and of the best understandings. But it is a misfortune in Religion, indeed throughout life, that we frequently overlook, or even despise, many excellent truths, merely because they are plain and easy :--- whereas they ought, upon that very account, to be the more highly admired. The clearest rules, the plainest precepts, are ever the most useful, and of course the most valuable.

2dly. When we think on the reverence, which we owe to God ; we must not forget that, which we owe to the Son of God :--- Whom the Scriptures represent, as exalted far above all beings ; as next, or equal, in honor and authority, to the eternal Father. " All power," says our Lord himself, " is given unto me ; in heaven and earth."--- St. Paul expressly tells the Hebrews, that " God has appointed him heir of all things ;" that " he is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."--- This Apostle, in like manner, tells the Ephesians ; that " God has put all things in subjection under his feet ; has set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,



“ places, far above all principality and  
“ power, above every name that is named,  
“ not only in this world, but in that  
“ which is to come.” St. Peter teaches  
the same doctrine, in almost the same words  
---that “ Christ is gone into Heaven, and  
“ is on the right hand of God : Angels,  
“ authorities, and powers, being made sub-  
“ ject unto him.”

But there is another, indeed a prior reason ; for which your Savior demands your profoundest reverence : namely, that ‘ He  
‘ is the Great Agent, by whom the Al-  
‘ mighty Father, not only governs all things  
‘ at present ; but by whom also he created  
‘ all things at the beginning. So that,  
‘ though we derive our being ultimately  
‘ from God ; we received it immediately, by  
‘ the ministration of Christ.’

This is a point, I have frequent occasion to insist upon ; and which is so repeatedly urged throughout the New Testament, that it cannot escape the notice of any person, who is conversant with the Sacred Writings. St. Paul, in the passage of his Epistle to the Hebrews, just now cited, positively asserts, that “ By him God made the  
“ world.”

“ world.” In his Epistle to the Colossians, he calls him “ the image of the invisible God ; by whom all things were created, both in heaven and earth ; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers :---All things were created by him, and for him. He is before all things : and by him all things consist.” I shall only add, that St. John, in order to give us the highest possible idea of him, opens his Gospel with declaring, that “ the Word” (by which he means our Savior) “ is God ;” that “ he was, in and from the beginning, with God ;” that “ all things were made by him : and without him, was not any thing made, that was made.”

Now, I say, as the foregoing Scriptures incontestably prove the superlative dignity of Christ, as Head and Lord of the creation ; so do they, in a peculiar manner, point out the regards, that are due to him from us, as his creatures, and servants.

Again. Whenever I mention piety, or reverence for the Supreme Being, as the foundation of religion, and of religious conduct ; you will easily understand me to mean

mean by it, not the barely thinking of him with reverence; but the actually exerting our best endeavours to find out, and to obey, his will; as far as ever we can discover it, by the light of our own reason, or by the declarations which he himself has made of it. For as a man can have no true regard for any earthly superior; as a son can have no real affection for his father, nor a servant for his master, if he takes no pains to please and to oblige him; it is exactly the same with our Father and Master in heaven. There can be no such thing as piety, no love or fear of God, where there is not an hearty desire to learn his will, and to perform it faithfully with all our power. Whence I am naturally led to the following important conclusion.

That, \* As the Gospel is a manifestation  
\* of the divine will to men, which the Son  
\* of God came from Heaven to publish and  
\* propagate; this Gospel does consequently  
\* claim our strictest attention.' Therefore,  
to examine it carefully and understand it  
well; to inquire diligently what it contains,  
to observe conscientiously what it enjoins;  
in a word, to make it the rule of our  
faith

faith and practice; to form our minds, and to guide our actions, by it;---should be the chief study, the grand business, of our lives: and is the only evidence we can possibly give, of gratitude or affection, either for our Maker, or our Savior.

So this blessed Savior has often told us, as an eternal warning against all false pretences and pretenders to religion. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them;---HE it is, that LOVETH me." So, again. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. And the word which ye hear, is not mine; but the Father's, who sent me."

godly. As our Maker, and our Redeemer, demand our highest reverence, because they are supreme in power, wisdom, and goodness; so is there a reverence due from us to all God's creatures, according to the degree in which they possess these heavenly qualities.

It is imagined, nor is there the least reason to doubt, that, between ourselves and the infinite Creator, there are innumerable orders of spiritual creatures. And our  
idea



idea of these creatures necessarily rises, in proportion as we conceive them to resemble the divine Being, or to partake of the divine perfections; which are the everlasting standard of all that is great or good. And this reflection, by the way, should utterly mortify all our pride; should teach us the most humble thoughts, concerning ourselves, concerning the whole human race; as probably the lowest, the least important part, of the intelligent creation.

I beg, however, you will by no means suppose me to insinuate, that 'we must worship angels, or pay divine honours to the greatest of created beings.' Which would be a direct affront to the Creator, and is solemnly forbidden in scripture: Those honours being limited, peculiarly and solely, to God himself. What therefore, I insist upon, is only this; that 'As far as we know, or have cause to believe, that any creature is more eminent in rank, more excellent in quality, more like to the Deity, than ourselves; so far has that creature an indisputable right, not indeed to our external adoration, but to our internal veneration and esteem.' For you cannot, I am sure, deny

deny it to be a rational sentiment, that ‘ the  
‘ value we set upon all persons, upon all be-  
‘ ings, should always be proportioned to the  
‘ best judgment we can form, of the digni-  
‘ ty of their nature.’

Thus does the consideration of our depen-  
dence upon God as Universal Creator, teach  
us to behave towards himself, towards the  
Son of God, and the higher classes of our  
fellow-creatures.

How it directs us to act towards each  
other, and the inferior animals about us,  
(for it instructs us in our duty to every  
thing that has life) I hope to make appear,  
when we meet again.

To the King Eternal.

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2. Д. М. О. И. Я. З.

...of their nature, ...  
...best judgment we can form of the ...  
...ings, should always be ...  
...value we set upon all we do, upon all we ...  
...deny it to be a national sentiment, that ...

Thus does the combination of our human  
nature upon God's spiritual power, which  
we to believe, receive, and which is  
the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit of our  
Father, and the Holy Spirit of our

How it affects us is to tell us that we are not alone, and that we are not alone in our struggle. It is to tell us that we are not alone in our struggle, and that we are not alone in our struggle.

11

11 MON 11

Vol. I

## S E R M O N II.

*Did not he that made me in the womb, make him?*

**W**HEN I chose these words for my subject, at our last meeting; I proposed the following method of discoursing upon them.

I. To lay before you the particular occasion, from which they took their rise.

II. To explain and justify the doctrine they contain.

III. To apply this doctrine at large, towards the promotion of good manners, and true religion, amongst us.

In my former Sermon, I finished two of these heads, and part of the third. I pointed out to you the immediate origin, and connection, of the text. I proved the



doctrine which Job delivers in it, that ' All things are under the direction of some Supreme Being, who created and governs them,' to be founded in nature, in reason, in universal experience; as well as in scripture. I then remarked to you, that this important doctrine fully instructs us in the general principles of duty, both towards God himself, and towards all the creatures he has made; that it teaches us to reverence him in the highest degree, and to reverence all other beings superior to ourselves, in proportion as we believe they resemble him, or partake of his divine perfections: especially the Son of God, whom he has invested with all power, in heaven and earth; who was the great messenger and revealer of his will to men.

IN what remains under the III. head, I shall shew you; ' How the text directs us to behave, towards our own species; and towards the other creatures, whom God has appointed to inhabit this globe of earth, in common with ourselves.'

I. Then. It reminds all the upper part of mankind, all on whom providence has conferred wealth and power, any pre-eminence

nence or command over others; it reminds them, I say, of their duty to inferiors; to poor men, and servants; to all who are placed in a dependent condition, or perform the lower and laborious offices of life. It teaches them, that not mere justice only, but kind and generous treatment likewise, is due, and should be shewn, to all such persons. We must not barely pay them what they can demand for their services, and then take no further thought about them; as is too commonly the practice; but must have some concern about their welfare, some regard to their happiness. We must advise and admonish them, when they err; assist and relieve them, in sickness, in old age. We must sympathize with their faults, from a remembrance of our own. We must lay no unreasonable commands, upon them; never behave imperiously, or contemptuously, towards them; but consider them, and use them, as fellow-creatures; as men, of like passions, of like infirmities, with ourselves.

To prove this obligation, there wants no refined reasoning, no subtlety of argument. A man needs only repeat to himself, the

words of my text : and, if he has not lost all feeling, he will feel its force immediately. " Did not he that made me, make " him ? " Did not one omnipotent hand fashion us both ? What does the greatest man living possess, which he did not receive from this universal benefactor ; who is inexpressibly superior to him, beyond what he can possibly be, I do not say to the meanest man, but to the meanest reptile upon the ground !

If we therefore hope for mercy, at the hand of this Almighty Lord ; ought we not to exercise that same mercy towards all, over whom our frail, our short-lived, power extends ? That we ought to do so, is the voice of nature ; the dictate of every man's natural reason, and common sense. Beside which, it is abundantly confirmed by Scripture ; is constantly enjoined, both by our Savior himself, and by all his Apostles.

" Be not ye," says that divine teacher, and pattern of humility ; " be not ye called " Rabbi ; " be not fond of pompous titles, do not affect to lord it over your fellow Christians. " For one is your master, even " Christ : and all ye are brethren." So says  
St.

St. Paul, in words of exactly the same import with those of Job preceding the text :  
 " Masters, give unto your servants," to all who rank beneath you, or get their living under you, " that which is just and equal ;  
 " knowing, that ye also have a master in " heaven."

This relation, which God bears indiscriminately to all mankind, is the grand principle of religion and morals ; the grand subject, upon which the Apostle preached at Athens ; that famous seat of philosophy and learning. " He giveth to all, life, and " breath, and all things. He hath made " of one blood, all nations, to dwell on the " face of the earth."

2dly, therefore. As the text teaches superiors their duty to those below them ; so does it, with equal strength of evidence, teach inferiors their duty to those above them.---" Did not he that made me, make " him ;" is an unbounded argument for doing what is fair and honourable. It is an everlasting reason, why no man can possibly defame, defraud, or in any manner invade the rights of his neighbour, without offending against his maker, against his own



conscience. If there is "One God, one father of us all," then are we all, without exception, indispensably obliged to serve him; and to love one another, for his sake.

The infinite Creator, who formed us for society, and knows the hearts of all men, "regards no man's person." He "gives no license to sin," either to great or small. He alike forbids the rich, on the one hand, to starve the poor; and the poor, on the other, to plunder the rich. He enjoins every man the duties proper to the station, in which he has placed him: commands governors to be just and upright, subjects to be orderly and peaceable; the former to rule with equity and mercy, the latter to obey with modesty and fear. In a word. He is a righteous, an impartial, judge: the rewarder of goodness, the revenger of wickedness, wheresoever and in whomsoever they are found; whether in a prince, or a beggar.---All this I take to be as plain, as it is important; to be what no creature can doubt or misunderstand, who has any idea of religion, any knowledge of God or of himself.

Accord-

Accordingly, if you consult the scriptures, you will find it is the doctrine, which they teach, with one consent,

“Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free; but he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

So, again. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. Whether to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as to them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of those who do well. Honor all men. “Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Reverence the king. Servants, obey in all things, your masters according to the flesh.”

I will beg your attention to only one quotation more. “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power, but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, shall receive to themselves  
“damnation

“damnation. Render therefore to all  
“their dues. Owe no man any thing, but  
“to love one another.”

This last is the precept, that would effectually heal our griefs; that would make us as good, and as happy too, as we can be on this side heaven! To “Owe no man  
“any thing but brotherly love,” would prevent every occasion of strife and confusion, every species of injustice or violence, throughout all orders of people, from the monarch to the slave. “For,” as the apostle most judiciously adds, “He who loveth  
“another, hath fulfilled the law.” ‘He  
‘who acts upon this sacred maxim, that  
‘God is his father, and man his brother,  
‘will discharge his duty with uniform fidelity; whatever be his situation, or office,  
‘in life.’

No wonder then, that Christ has made mutual charity, the distinguishing character, the glory, of a christian! “By this  
“shall all men know, that ye are my disciples; if ye have love one to another.” And in his last conversation with the apostles, just before he suffered; he leaves it with them, as his final, as his most solemn, injunction:

injunction: "This is my commandment;  
"that ye love one another, as I have loved  
"you."

3dly. Since both men, and all the other  
animals we see about us, have one common  
origin, one God who created them; it ma-  
nifestly follows, that 'Not our own spe-  
'cies only, but those other animals like-  
'wise, may justly claim some share of our  
'affection.' The question in the text,  
"Did not He that made Me, make Him";  
has an unlimited application to all the  
inferior creatures around us. It clearly  
shews you, that 'no man can answer, ei-  
'ther before God or himself, to abuse  
'them in any degree, or by any kind of  
'cruelty.'

I am very sensible, but very sorry, that  
to talk about the duty of men towards  
brutes, is somewhat unusual in this place;  
and that some persons, from bad education,  
from imperfect or corrupted notions of re-  
ligion, will think it a doctrine scarce worth  
attending to. Such persons, however, I  
hope, will alter their mind; when they  
have heard this matter fairly represented.

If



If reason then and scripture unitedly declare, that God gave to all things their being, that his tender mercies are over all his works; if he has graciously provided for the support and preservation of the whole animal world as well as of mankind, opening his hand and filling all things living with plenteousness; if he has bestowed upon their bodies the same inimitable workmanship, as upon ours; if Christ himself declares, that not a sparrow can fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father; if all this be confessedly and undeniably true; How can we wantonly (for that is what I chiefly mean) how can we wantonly torment any animal, or make its life miserable, without insulting and affronting the good Creator?

Never imagine, therefore, that no compassion, no tenderness, is due to the lower orders of your fellow-creatures; or that it is no sort of sin, to give them needless, unnecessary pain. For it is, beyond all dispute, one of the worst, the most heinous, sins! There is something not barely wicked, but detestably base and cowardly, in distressing and afflicting a poor brute, that  
can

can neither speak for itself, nor defend itself! They who take pleasure in this, as great numbers appear to do, have hearts of flint; and would treat men in the very same manner, if they dared to do it, or had them as much in their power. And whereas this is a crime, which is never punished as it ought to be, in the present world; -- the heavier will be its punishment, in the next; where all they that have shewn no mercy, shall have judgment without mercy.

I verily believe it is a maxim with many, who currently pass for pious Christians, that God, from an excessive partiality to man, never employs a thought about the other creatures who inhabit this earth, but leaves them all to us, to use them, or to misuse them, just as we think fit; that our single race engages his whole attention; that we alone, among all the innumerable tribes with which he himself has stocked the globe, are objects worthy of his notice or concern. Than which opinion nothing, to be sure, can betray a more contracted soul, or grosser ignorance and presumption! A bare repetition of the great man's words in the text, will confute it instantly. "Did not He  
" that

“that made Us, make Them?” Can infinite wisdom possibly be conceived, to disregard and despise the works of its own hands? The very supposition is absurd, as well as impious, in the last degree!

Further yet. To the cruelties men exercise upon each other, they are prompted by interest, by ambition, by revenge:--- Which motives account for their behaviour; and, in some measure, alleviate their guilt. But these motives being out of the question in all barbarity shewn to innocent creatures that have neither intention nor power to injure us, leave it utterly indefensible and unpardonable.

I will detain you with but one remark more, on this unpopular, this too generally neglected, topick. Namely, How ill we should relish such treatment from Angels; from all the higher order of creatures: who have unquestionably full as much right, full as much reason, to use us with cruelty and contempt; as we can have to do so, by the animals beneath us. For those celestial spirits are, without controversy, vastly more above us, in power and all perfections; than we are, above the lowest beast of the field.

Yet

Yet they, instead of delighting to hurt or make us wretched, are kindly employed as guardians and protectors, in preserving us from what is evil, in directing us to our supreme, everlasting good. They watch over us, and love us, for God's sake, for our own sakes. And we must endeavour to attain their heavenly temper of mind, if ever we hope to partake of their happiness, or to be admitted into their blessed society.

4thly. From what has passed upon this subject, you will easily gather, that 'the substance of all sound morality, as well as of all true religion, necessarily consists in two points: first, in a belief that there is one God, from whom all things have their being: secondly, in acts of goodness towards mankind, and all his other creatures; out of love to him, out of reverence for him.' In acts of goodness, I say, towards all his other creatures. For the notion, that 'we owe no kind of duty to any animals upon earth, except those of our own particular figure;' has, I hope, been proved, to be totally unworthy of a man, but especially of a christian!

5thly.



gthly. Here then, you see, is the perfection of human virtue, --- Not merely to do what is right; but to do it from this noble motive, upon this noble principle; that ' God, who is infinitely wise and just, ' sees it, approves it, and will reward it,' This is the rule, by which all men should walk. This is religion, as it stands pure and uncorrupt, in reason, in scripture, in the breast of every sincerely devout man; unmixt with the doctrines of any church or party, with the interested schemes of any sect or faction whatsoever. It is by this great rule, that the angels, and all the inhabitants of the superior worlds, govern their conduct. For a regard to the divine will, and an unfeigned desire to please God, is the eternal principle of action, to the whole universe of rational creatures.

Hence our Savior has made it an essential article in our daily prayer, that " the " will of God may be done upon earth, as " it is in heaven." Hence also the same divine teacher commands us, to do good, not from sordid views of receiving twice as much again; or of getting the praises and applauses of men; which views, would  
absolutely

absolutely destroy all our merit; but from the glorious prospect of recommending our behaviour, to the supreme Father and Judge.

“Do good, and lend; hoping for nothing

“again: and your reward shall be great:

“ye shall be the children of the Most High.”

Now here let me remark to you (for it well deserves your notice) how plain and unaffected are these words of our Savior: yet, at the same time, how generous, how exalted, are the sentiments they contain!

“Do good, and lend; hoping for nothing

“again: and your reward shall be great!

“ye shall be the children of the Most High!

“For he is kind to the unthankful, and to

“the evil.” In which precept, there is a

dignity of thought, that nothing can equal,

but the simplicity of the language, wherein

it is expressed. The like remark (which I

think myself bound to make, whenever oc-

casion offers) is applicable to the text itself,

to the verses preceding it; and to numberless

other passages of scripture; where the great-

est truths are spoken, the most sublime doc-

trines conveyed, in terms familiar to the

meanest hearer.

Vol. I. D. 6. Lastly,

6. Lastly. The proper conclusion of all discourses delivered from this place, is; earnestly to request, that you will remember and practise the matters they recommend. As the text then comprehends every man's duty, in a small compass; let each of us repeat it frequently to himself, and adapt it to his own particular case.

When the master, for example, or any man in authority, would abuse that authority to the hurt of another; would "oppress the hireling, in his wages;" or inflict any hardship upon any one, who is subject to him, or cannot resist him; let him stop a while, and ask himself this short question: "Did not He that made Me, make Him." Above all. Let him recollect those affectionate expressions, in the verses before the text: "If I have despised the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what shall I do, when God riseth up: and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him!"

On the other side, if any servant has formed a design, to wrong the master who feeds him, and clothes him; or if any poor man,

man; rather than earn his living by honest labour; wants to get it by defrauding and robbing men of property; if any person, in short, whatever be his rank or profession (which makes a very immaterial difference) would in any respect injure or insult his neighbour, regardless of laws human and divine; --- let all and every of these reflect, that 'The same God who created the one created the other also, and will infallibly punish all unrighteousness in both.'

Again. When any of you would play the tyrant upon some poor brute; that has the misfortune of being committed to his care; let him too put the same question to his conscience: "Did not He that made Me, made this Creature likewise?" --- Let him especially remember, that 'Whoever is barbarous to any thing under him, must never dare to complain of hard usage from his masters upon earth, nor ever expect mercy from his master in heaven.'

Finally. Let the doctrine of the text remind us all, of our unspeakable obligations to God, who created us; to the son of God, who redeemed us, who came down from heaven to enlighten and to save us: let it



teach us, I say, to love and reverence them, with our highest affections.----And as no man can possibly love his maker, if he does not love his fellow-creatures; let it therefore dispose us to universal benevolence.--- Let it render us faithful in our dealings, charitable in our sentiments, submissive to those above us, condescending to those below us; in one word, heartily ready, on all occasions, to serve and oblige each other.

If it has these effects, upon us; if it produces these inclinations, and this behaviour, in us; it will secure the three great ends of religion; the honour of the divine laws, the peace of human society in the present world, the eternal welfare of individuals in that which is to come.

To God, only wise.

S E R M O N III.

## S E R M O N III.

A C T S xxiv. 15.

*And have Hope towards God, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the just and unjust.*

\* **W**HEN St. Paul uses the word Resurrection, he takes it sometimes in a general, at other times in a more limited notion. The general sense of the word is, a future state; a restoration to another life, or manner of existence, after the present one is ended; the Resurrection, in short, of the soul, or of the proper man. In a particular acceptation, the Apostle applies it to the raising of our corporeal part; or God's investing us with new and glorified bodies. But he never treats it in that scholastic way, wherein some persons are wont to amuse their own fancies, and to puzzle the heads of others, with their  
D 3                      quirks,

quirks, and their queries, 'Whether the  
' same identical body, the same individual  
' particles, will be restored to life.'

In the famous fifteenth Chapter of his  
first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he  
proposes the scruple of the Philosophers,  
"How are the dead raised, or with what  
"body do they come;" his reply to it, is  
founded in the infinite power of God, and  
in what we find throughout the other works  
of nature. He produces an instance, from  
the corn in the field; to confute the ob-  
jection, of 'The impossibility of recovering  
' a dead body to life.' "Thou fool, that  
"which thou sowest, is not quickened,  
"except it die." The corn, to all appear-  
ance, rots, or dies, after it is sown. Yet  
the inward seed does not perish, but revives,  
and rises to new life. So man has in him  
an inward seed, or principle, of animal life  
(whatever becomes of the outward shell, the  
visible husk, that now covers it) which the  
power and good pleasure of God, will cause  
to spring from the grave into a new body,  
fitted to the condition of the soul, that is to  
actuate it in another state.

But

But the grand point is contained in the first, in the general, meaning of the word ; namely, ' God's raising men, (whether with ' the body or without it) to a future life of ' reward or punishment, for their behavior ' in this present one.'

St. Paul had sometimes to deal with people, such as the Jewish sadducees ; who, though they acknowledged the truth of Revelation, yet disallowed, or doubted about, a future state. And his arguments against them, were drawn from the evidences of Christianity ; from the great, well-attested fact, of Christ's resurrection. But when his controversy was with men, who denied all revealed religion ; against these he argued, in the mere rational way ; as against the Philosophers just now mentioned, and against the unbelievers in the twenty-sixth chapter of this book: " Why should it be " thought a thing incredible with you, that " God should raise the dead ?"

So likewise, if we have any such disputants to encounter ; it will be expected, that we should treat the cause in another manner, than as Christians ; and should fetch our weapons, from another storehouse.----



They, who will hear of nothing but reason, must be discoursed with at first upon that footing only.

Now the apostle, here, founds this important doctrine upon our "Hope in God:" which hope in God I shall consider as signifying, 'our most rational sentiments concerning him.' And then the text will furnish us with fair topics, whereupon to reason the case, even against those, who will not be swayed by the authority of scripture; which, in all likelihood, they have examined, neither often enough, nor long enough, to acquire any belief of it.

I shall think the whole question abundantly satisfied, by the decision of these three obvious inquiries. I. Whether man, viewed at large, does not appear to be such a creature, as was intended by his Creator, for a future state; and, from his very frame, from his very faculties, may naturally expect it. II. Whether the different conduct of virtuous and wicked men, of "the just and the unjust," be not a plain reason, why there ought to be such a state of recompense, or account. III. Whether the argument, with respect

to Almighty God in particular, be not still more strongly convincing.

I. First, then. Whoever will act so much like a man, as to look into himself, to observe the workings of his own mind, and to see what kind of being he is, will presently find himself to be thus endowed. He will find, that he not only has the capacities of sense, in common with the other animals about him; and passions, arising from the impressions of sensible objects; but that he has something far superior. He has a power of reflecting upon these objects and impressions, of comparing them together; of deliberating upon their several natures, and effects; of discerning the good, or the evil, that is in them. In consequence of which information, he can form his judgment, and determine his actions, with rational freedom.

This is the self-moving power, which every man feels within him. And these qualities afford an evidence, of the utmost probability, if not of strict demonstration, that the subject, to which they belong, is something totally distinct from matter, and all material bodies. There is no affinity, no  
similitude,

similitude, between the properties of the one, and of the other. Bodies, by whatever you do, or can conceive to be done to them, only change their figure, the situation and texture of their parts, their quantity, their place, or their motion. All which are as different, in our idea, from understanding, or even from bare perception, as time from space, as light and colors from musical sounds.

This essential difference, between the soul and the body, leads us to conclude, that the existence of the former, has no necessary dependence upon its conjunction with the body; at least, upon its conjunction with this or that particular body, in which it may at any time dwell. We cannot, I say, help concluding, that the mind is of quite another nature from the body; that it cannot derive its being, or its powers, from the body; though it may, indeed, for a while, make use of bodily organs, as instruments to exert its powers by.

And this is what we truly mean, by the natural immortality of the human mind. Not, that 'it has, in itself, any inherent principle of eternal life; of absolute, independent

‘dependent, existence.’ No! Angels themselves are not thus immortal. All depend upon the will of the supreme Creator. God alone has immortality, inseparable from him. We only mean therefore, that the nature of the soul is such, as does not necessarily confine it to the residence, or operations, of the body; that God has enabled and qualified it to live, after “this its earthly tabernacle” shall be dissolved.

If you go on, and consider these qualifications of your mind, in the moral, as well as the natural, view of them;--- If you reflect upon your reason, your free-will, your free-agency, as giving you a sense of moral obligation, a sense of right and wrong in your behaviour, a power of doing much service or much mischief, in your present state;--- If you look upon yourselves as creatures, formed with abilities to find out the will of your maker; and placed by him in a social world, wherein you must live, either good for something, or good for nothing, or guilty of evil, which is yet far worse than nothing;---All these considerations most clearly shew, that you are accountable for your actions; that you are  
proper



proper subjects of reward or punishment, according to the quality of them.

II. Let us now proceed, and take a further step of inquiry. Are not the two sorts of men, into whom the world is generally divided, "the just and the unjust."--- Are not they the very persons, that ought to be called upon, that ought to be raised up again, to give an account of their former conduct? Is not the case of the virtuous and the wicked such as deserves, nay such as demands, to have some cognizance taken of it; such as, upon every supposition of a providence, cries aloud for a future state; wherein all things wrong, may be rectified and set strait?

When a pious, benevolent man, in the train of a few fleeting years, has been carefully surveying himself; has been contemplating the works, and attributes, of his Maker; been copying the divine original from which he sprung, in every virtue, in every method of doing good;---What has he gained, or how far is he advanced? Why, he has inevitably raised in himself a laudable ambition, a generous thirst, after higher knowledge, after ampler perfections; of which he feels his nature capable; and which he  
has

has no doubt the great author, who gave him that nature, is abundantly able to bestow upon him.---Then he drops down, quits this transitory being, and is no more seen!

And can this, think you, be the final end of such a creature? Will it be thus flattered, in its joys; be thus disappointed of its purest hopes, its fairest expectations? What would this be, but 'leading a finely accomplished mind to the fountain of bliss; permitting it a sight of those living waters; and then carrying it back, infinitely more thirsty, than it came?'

But I know you will say, 'These expectations of another state, are mere presumption in us; and what men of the most unexceptionable characters, have no right to form. Virtue is its own reward. And he, that gave us one life, is not bound to give us a second.'

Your objection would bear some weight, were the life of a good man now in its perfection; were it not manifestly a state of trial; were virtue in such easy circumstances, as to meet with no obstructions; to be uniformly practised, free from hardships, pain, or labor. But this is not the case with

with man, in his present condition: the very best of which, is a mixture of bitter, and sweet; of pleasure, incorporated with various strifes and cares! So that, whoever seeks for happiness here, genuine, or unalloyed; hunts a shadow, and grasps at the wind.

In short, they who wish to serve their Maker, or to cultivate their most amiable affections, must struggle against their passions; must often fight their way through infinite corruptions, through numberless bad and great examples; must bear the shock of reproach, calumny, insolence, and disgrace. --- The position, therefore, that 'Virtue is always its own immediate reward, and vice its own immediate punishment,' is contradicted by all history, as well as experience.

For what do we find has been the present fate of those exalted spirits, who have sacrificed their inferior desires to their reason: Who have triumphed over the allurements of vice; and have thought nothing too dear, for the honour of their Creator, or the benefit of their fellow-creatures? --- Why, many of them, (which is quite sufficient

cient to my present argument.) Many of them, I say, have received no recompence here, but a despised, perhaps a persecuted life; and, after it, an obscure, ignoble, grave.

On the other hand, How has the case stood; I mean, how has it frequently stood; with your men of the opposite character? Look through the four great empires of the globe!--What has become of all the monsters, who have plundered, and laid waste, the earth---the "ten thousand times ten thousand," who have risen and braved it upon the rights of mankind; upon the ruin of kingdoms, as well as upon the destruction of all private property----who have rioted in wicked pleasures, affronted their God, trampled upon all law and duty?--Why, many of them (which I again declare to be quite sufficient for my purpose) great numbers of them have felt no particular present vengeance; but have laid down their heads, in pomp and grandeur; have been covered with marble, and inshrined in gold. These things would be enough to overturn the firmest, the most steady, minds;--were we destitute of all hope in some superior



rior power, willing, as he is able, to balance these uneven accounts; to make them terminate, in a full and blessed reconciliation. Now, Who can that power be, but the all-wise governor of the world?

By "our hope in God," I have all along wished to understand, 'our most rational apprehensions, of him, and his perfections.'---Let us then, III, Inquire, 'Whether such a hope, will not render our expectation of a future state, still more strong, and indubitable.'

Epicurus's notion of the Deity, was the most senseless, that ever entered a human brain. He allowed his existence, and then shut him up in a heaven of eternal sloth and inactivity. As if it could possibly bespeak wisdom and goodness, to create intelligent subjects; and yet be beneath that wisdom, to govern them by laws suited to their natures.

Every good governor over such subjects, has a constant regard to his own honor, and to what we call the honor of his government. God's honor does not consist in the praises, given him by his creatures: This is a sort of honor, which vain men affect, and are fond of. God is glorious, in and from himself;

self, whether his creatures pay him any grateful acknowledgments of his excellencies, or not. God's glory is, 'The employment of the wisest means, to the acquisition of the noblest ends.' These ends are, the perfection, and happiness, of his rational servants; to be attained by their observing certain rules of action, which he has adapted to their constitution, to their faculties, to the state he has placed them in.

For effecting these ends, his laws must be guarded with such sanctions, they must be enforced by such rewards and punishments, as are proper to engage the obedience of his subjects.

This is divine government, and the honor of that government! This is divine wisdom, justice, and goodness.

But how are these ends prevented, how utterly are they defeated, with respect to this world of ours; if death concludes the existence of good men, and brings no recompense, or penalty, upon wicked ones! If laborious virtue, and integrity of heart, be reduced to a level with licentious vice! If the generous imitation of the divine nature, the love of truth, the exercise of

righteousness, often meet with contempt, or even oppression, here; and be treated with no distinction, no pre-eminence, hereafter!

To be short. If prosperous villainy, and injured innocence; if the sorrows of the afflicted, and the lewd joys of the prophane; if the sobriety of the studious, and the debaucheries of the libertine; if the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," and the spirit of tyranny, turbulence, and sedition;---If these, I say, are all to be buried in one grave of eternal oblivion; then the world, I am sure, is no work of regularity, or beauty; but an immense scene of deformity and confusion!

As soon would I believe, that "the universe was produced from ridiculous atoms, 'or is governed by blind chance,' as that 'it can be conducted by an all-perfect Creator, without a final distribution of justice, to the behaviour of all his free, intelligent, creatures.' For, in one plain word; there is not a pin to choose, between natural nonsense, and moral absurdity.

As

### S E R M O N III. 51

As I have thus far pursued the Apostle's argument, with regard to the rational man; my application of it, shall be addressed to the Christian.

You have the comfort to see, that your hopes of a future life, are all founded, not in Revelation only, but in the previous constitution of things; that they flow from the very nature of man; from the condition of the present world; from the perfections of God, its author, and providential governor.

With what unspeakable satisfaction, therefore, may you reflect upon the circumstances of this future state, as they are expressly revealed to you in scripture! Does it not, for example, give you infinite joy, to be assured that 'He, the Son of God, who came down  
' from heaven to instruct you; who died,  
' to redeem you; who rose again, to justify  
' you; and is re-ascended into heaven, to be  
' your powerful intercessor at the right hand  
' of God;---that he, I say, is the very per-  
' son, who will finally judge, and pass sen-  
' tence upon, you?'

But, in the mean time, I entreat you to remember, that, merciful as this Savior may be, if you do not sincerely endeavour to fol-



low his steps, and to fulfil his laws; you can have no part, no place, in his kingdom. If you do not now begin to be "Sons of God, in newness of life;" you can never be "Sons of the new world," or "Children of the resurrection."

Whereas, if you give all diligence to rise in your virtues, as well as in your hopes; then let death be no terror to you! Then let the words of St. Paul, be your everlasting consolation!---That, though you die from among men, "Your life is hid with Christ in God"---Hid---Not buried in darkness, not sunk in obscurity or uncertainty;---but hid, as treasures, as things precious, are hid; that is, carefully laid up, faithfully preserved, till God shall call it forth; till, "Christ, who is your life, shall appear, and shall cause you also to appear with him in glory."

To whom, only wise.

#### S E R M O N I V.

## S E R M O N IV.

P S A L M. 139. 7.

*Whether shall I go then from thy spirit? Or  
whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

\* **T**O believe the Being of God, is the foundation of all religion; as duly to reflect upon it, is the spring of all our devotion, all our duty towards him.---- There is no part of the divine character, but what tends to raise some pious affection in our minds, and leads us to a virtuous conduct of our lives. Thus, his impartial justice, should make us dread to offend him; by neglecting his worship, or by transgressing his commands. His goodness and mercy, to his creatures in general, to ourselves in particular, demand from us the most hearty returns, of praise, love, and gratitude.

That attribute of the Deity, which is here so finely described, his immensity or universal presence, appears even more wonderful, than any of the rest; and equally abounds with moral instruction. The royal author seems to have designedly penned the Psalm before us, upon this lofty theme.--- But, on whatever occasion it was immediately composed; it is more express and full upon this subject, than perhaps any thing we meet with, throughout the Sacred Writings.

In the first five verses, the Psalmist, reverently addressing himself to Almighty God, celebrates his perfect knowledge of our human nature; of all our daily various actions, and even of all our most secret intentions; of our whole conduct in short, whether retired or open, whether public or private. "O Lord! thou hast searched me out, and known me. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou art about my paths, and spiëst out all my ways. There is not a word, in my tongue; but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind,  
" and

“and before; and laid thine hand upon  
“me.”

Thus he goes on, with great beauty and strength of imagination, to the nineteenth verse; declaring the impossibility, that any person, thing, or object, can be concealed from God's all-seeing eye; which commands every point of universal space, views all that passes throughout the whole creation. “Whither shall I go from thy  
“spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy  
“presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou  
“art there: If I descend to hell, thou art  
“there also. If I take the wings of the  
“morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts  
“of the sea; even there also, shall thy hand  
“lead me, and thy right hand shall hold  
“me.”

From God's being thus intimately acquainted with the behaviour of all his creatures, the Psalmist most wisely infers, that he will make a suitable difference in his dealings with them, according to their respective deserts; and, at the same time, expresses his own abhorrence of all ungodliness. “Surely, thou wilt slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me therefore,



“Ye bloody men! Do not I hate them,  
 “O Lord, that hate thee? And am not  
 “I grieved with those, that rise up against  
 “thee?”

He then appeals to God, for the sincerity of his heart, in these declarations; and concludes with intreating the Divine Grace, to assist his honest endeavours; to confirm him in a course of religious virtue.---

“Search me, O God: try me, and examine my thoughts: see if there be any  
 “way of wickedness in me, and lead me in  
 “the way everlasting.”

Thus it seems to be the purpose of this noble hymn, to assert the Divine Omnipresence; or that ‘God exists in every place, ‘is witness to every action, and every design; that consequently his providential ‘care and government, are as unbounded as ‘himself.’

My business, in what follows, shall be;  
 I. To establish this important doctrine; and to explain God’s universal presence, as far as we seem capable of conceiving rightly, or of talking rationally, about it. II. To deduce a few practical lessons from it;

and

and to point out the advantages, that may be drawn, from our reflections upon it.

**I.** Then. If God created all things, it is evident, by the very terms, that his power extends to them all; that he thoroughly understands the nature, and every property, of what he himself has made; that he can influence and over-rule them, can exercise his sovereign authority over them, in whatever manner he thinks fit.

As he created all things; all things must be equally dependent upon him: all must be equally subject to him: all must derive their original, essential qualities, from him. He is the life, the first great active principle, of the universe: there is no being in it, but what he introduced: there is no perfection, in any part of it; but what proceeded from him, and is comprehended in him.

Further yet. As God created all things, he can again destroy them: as he gave them their being, he can take it away. For the same reason, he can produce any alteration in them, any change in their condition, which their nature will admit, and he is pleased to bring upon them.

Thus

Thus much, I think, is not only consonant to philosophy, but is intelligible to every man; and shews you, how God may be said, in a very clear sense, to be present every where, or with every part of the universe; the whole of which, being his own divine work, is therefore entirely under his direction, and at his disposal.

adly. As all things depend upon God, for their first existence; so do they likewise, for the continuance of their being. His power is constantly exerted, to keep them in the order, in which they subsist; to preserve their several connections, the several relations they bear to each other. Were this superintending power to be once withdrawn, all life would die; all motion in the material world, would cease; this immense and beautiful frame of things, would be quickly dissolved, and lost in confusion. What the psalmist says of man, that "when God hideth his face, we are troubled; when he taketh away our breath, we return to our native dust;" this is applicable, to every other creature; which must be perpetually upheld, by the hand that created it; by the hand of him, who  
alone

alone is self-existent; in whom angels, as well as men, "live and move, and have their being."

Thus, again. Since God is not only the author of the universe, but, by an incessant providence, its gracious preserver; he may, in this respect too, be very justly said to be every where present.

How he is so; how he acts, at the same instant of time, upon subjects that are almost infinitely distant from each other; we cannot indeed tell; nor can our present faculties possibly comprehend it. But that he does this, is as certain, as that there is a God at all, or as any other truth in nature. There are ten thousand truths, which we infallibly know to be such; but which we can very imperfectly, if at all, account for. There are events without number, which we see come to pass every hour of the day; the formal production of which, is the profoundest mystery to us. We know abundantly more of effects, than of the manner in which they are effected. Our eyes, and all our senses, demonstrate the former: but we have no powers of body or mind, that can lead us to a discovery of the latter.

This



This intimate presence of the deity with every part of his creation, this constant exercise of his providence over it, is set forth by our Savior, under two of the most simple, and yet strongest figures, in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew: where he tells us, that "even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, without our heavenly Father;" and that, "the very hairs of our heads, are all numbered." By which he plainly means, that "no event, however insignificant it may appear to human ignorance or presumption, is beneath the observation of the infinite God;" that "nothing is done, or can ever come to pass, throughout the world, without his knowledge and permission."

Upon the whole. Though we can by no means explain the formal manner of this divine perfection; yet thus much we are sure of, and ought to rest satisfied in; that "God, as Author and Governor of universal nature, is every where present; by his wisdom to perceive, by his power to execute, whatever is possible in itself, and proper for him to perform."---This is quite enough, for us to understand: enough, to answer

answer every purpose of our present being: enough, to direct us, in what should be the end of all our knowledge; I mean, our practice; our obedience and duty towards him.

II. Which brings me to the second point proposed; namely, 'The uses, to which we must apply this doctrine, in the conduct of our lives.'

I. When we think upon this amazing attribute of the deity, it should strike us with the profoundest reverence and humility; with the deepest sense of our own weak, dependent condition. Humility is indeed a virtue, which every divine perfection ought to create in us; but more especially the attribute, I am now considering. All that we know, or can conceive of God, declares his supreme dominion over us: but this, in particular; that he is continually present with us; supplying our various necessities; supporting us in our very being, furnishing us with all things needful for its preservation and happiness. This, I say, more immediately leads us to reflect upon our indigent, helpless state; upon our entire subjection to the divine will.

ylbe

How

: How can we, then, sufficiently adore this Almighty power, which is always so near us! Which we every moment feel within ourselves, and see in all the objects that are about us! And without which, we, as well as they, should instantly perish, and sink into nothing! How can we forbear joining with the Psalmist, in that truly pious exclamation! "I will praise thee, O Lord! For I am wonderfully made! Marvellous are thy works! And that my soul knoweth right well!"

Such reflections as these, are not the offspring of superstitious fear, or an overheated imagination; but are the cool suggestions of reason, and necessarily rise in the breast of every man, who at all considers his own constitution.---You can neither look into yourself, nor view any part of the creation around you; but such thoughts will occur to you, almost whether you will or no. And never to be sensible of them, betrays either absolute inattention, or gross stupidity. It shews, either that our minds are totally unemployed; or else that they are employed upon subjects, unprofitable to us, and unworthy of our regard!

will

2dly.

2dly. Are we thus continually in the presence of God? How careful ought this to make us, of our whole behaviour!--- What a perpetual guard ought we to keep over ourselves, and every article of our conduct! How cautious should we be, not to neglect our duty, or transgress the laws of this all-seeing providence!

There is nothing so effectual to restrain men within the bounds of decency and virtue, or to deter them from all indecency and vice, as the presence of some person, whose authority they fear;---whose good opinion they esteem;---or to whom they are, upon whatever account, desirous of recommending themselves. Almost all people feel an awe about them, while they are in the company of those, whom they look upon as their superiors. And we should reckon a man profligate to excess, that would dare to commit any wickedness, in the sight of a Magistrate; or to break the laws of his country, in the face of his King. No creature could do this, but one, that was hardened against all regard to character, all sense of shame, all dread of punishment.

If



If then you pay such respect to the presence of men, of like infirmities with yourselves; never forget, that you are constantly in the presence of a far greater superior; that you act under the constant notice of the wisest, as well as the most powerful, of governors; who has perfect knowledge to discern, and is irresistibly able to punish, all that you do amiss: From whom all earthly magistrates derive their authority!---To whom princes themselves are subject; and depend upon him for their life, their health, their grandeur, and all that they enjoy, as much as the meanest, the poorest, of their people.

These considerations ought to have the greatest weight with us, according to all the established rules of good manners;---upon every principle of modesty, gratitude, or interest, that engages us to behave well, before one another. For, are you ashamed, openly to affront, or even to disoblige, a generous friend? God is the most bountiful, of all benefactors!---Do you honour the person, and tremble at the sentence, of an human judge; which, in its utmost rigor, can affect your body only? God is  
able

able to destroy both body and soul, for ever !  
In a word. Each motive, that can induce  
you to reverence your betters here upon  
earth, becomes infinitely stronger, when you  
apply it to that supreme master, whom we  
all have in heaven !

3dly. Our being thus perpetually in the  
sight of God, shews you the folly, as well  
as the baseness, of all private villainy ; of all  
insincerity, in our conversation, or concerns,  
with each other. For if neither heaven,  
nor earth, nor the deep itself, has a single  
corner that is exempt from this almighty  
power ; where can such wickedness expect  
to find shelter ? How can it hope to pass  
unnoticed, or unpunished ? If it can throw  
a vail over the faces of men, it cannot pos-  
sibly deceive the wisdom of God. If it  
should think to screen itself under cover of  
the night ; the Psalmist will tell you, that  
this is no defence from that all-piercing eye,  
“ To which the night is as clear as the day ;  
“ to which the light, and the darkness, are  
“ both alike.”

The scheme, in short, of all knaves, is  
to impose upon the world with such dex-  
terity, as to escape the present penalties,

‘ due to their crimes.’ Even in this, you find, they generally fail. But suppose they succeed : suppose they can fly, from human justice : they cannot fly, from their own guilty consciences ; nor from the judgment of Him, “ who is greater than their hearts, and knoweth all things.”

Let us then remember it, as a standing argument which the text affords us, against all kinds of falsehood, fraud, or treachery ; that, ‘ in the end, they defeat themselves ; and increase the condemnation, they mean to avoid. When they fancy themselves unseen, they are most exposed. When they imagine themselves most secure, they are in the utmost danger.’

4thly. As the doctrine before us, may justly be a terror to all wicked men ; so is it matter of the highest consolation to all good men. There cannot be a more delightful reflection, than to consider that we live under the constant inspection of a most merciful creator ; whose single view, in the formation of the world, was the welfare of his creatures ; who uniformly pursues the same gracious purpose, through the whole course of his providence ; whose laws are directed

directed to no other end ; and who has inseparably connected our duty with our happiness. These, I say, are most comfortable reflections ; that should support our courage under all the trials, which, in this state of probation, can be laid upon us.

Whenever God suffers good men to labour under any present distress ; he does it, for the exercise of their virtue ; and for other wise reasons, which demonstrate that, in the final issue of things, all will turn out to their everlasting advantage. If you have but the testimony of a good conscience ; this alone will insure the favor of God, and should give you an unshaken confidence in him. If you do but honestly discharge your several duties, to the best of your power ; whatever be your present circumstances, you cannot, in the end, be miserable ; you will be undoubtedly, and unspeakably, happy !

Here, then, is the refuge of all injured merit ; of all afflicted righteous persons ; that ‘ God, who sees and knows, and by ‘ his immense spirit fills, all things ; cannot possibly be unconcerned in the affairs, ‘ or be indifferent about the behaviour, of ‘ mankind.’ I defy you to conceive, that



infinite wisdom can be constantly present with us, without making us the objects of its constant attention ; without having a different regard to persons, according to their different characters, and different conduct. That it must do so, is evident from the reason of things ; is confirmed, by every page of scripture ; and follows from every idea we can form of God, whether by the light of nature, or of revelation.

“ The ways of man,” says Solomon, “ are before the eyes of the Lord : and he “ pondereth all his goings.” So, again : “ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, “ beholding the evil, and the good.” And the author of my text : “ The eyes of the “ Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears “ are open to their cry ; but the face of the “ Lord is against them, that do evil.”

Every considerate person has an internal conviction of the truth of this doctrine. As no wicked man therefore, if he thinks at all, can enjoy any real tranquillity ; so no man needs, no man ought, to despair, if he is but virtuous. Indeed a good man cannot despair, without absolutely forfeiting that character ; without betraying a criminal want of belief,

lief, in the supreme justice and providence.

thly. I shall conclude, with summing up all that has passed upon the subject; that you may the more easily recollect, and retain it.

The simplest, the most popular explanation, of the divine omnipresence, seems to be this :---That as God created all things, he cannot but be perfectly acquainted with their several natures, qualities, and mutual relations. And as they are all his own work, his own production; they must all be entirely dependent upon him, entirely subject to his direction. This is the condition of every created thing, wherever it exists. Consequently his knowledge and power must equally extend to (or, in other words, must be equally present with) every being; every part of the universe.

The practical uses to be made of this important article of religion, are chiefly those, which I have already mentioned. It should imprint upon our minds, the most humble sense of human frailty; with the profoundest reverence of that amazing power, by which we are thus in-

cessantly furrounded and supported. It teaches us the necessity of keeping a perpetual guard over our whole behaviour, towards God and man; of being upright, in all our designs; ingenuous and undisguised, in all our transactions. It is, (I mean, it ought to be) the bane of all clandestine villainy. It shews the common maxim, that 'honesty is the best policy,' to be universally true; in all cases, in all senses. Since the most accomplished hypocrite upon earth, cannot conceal a thought of his heart from the eyes of Him, who sees the secrets of all hearts, and will reward them openly. Finally. It yields the noblest comfort to every virtuous person, under the troubles incident to this transitory life; as it demonstrates, that God exercises an impartial government over us; and is the eternal protector of all good men: whose very sufferings therefore, are intended for their benefit; and cannot fail to end in their glory, if they bear them with that resignation to the divine will, which distinguishes a wise and religious mind.

Such

# S E R M O N IV. 71

Such are the inferences, proper to be drawn from this capital doctrine; such the uses, to which it should be applied. Nothing now remains, but what will depend entirely upon yourselves; namely, that 'Ye take care to remember these things, and to regulate your practise accordingly.'

To the King Eternal.

F 4 S E R M O N V.



Such are the interests, proprieties  
drawn from this right relation, as  
the one to which it should be applied  
nothing, notwithstanding, but what  
and to regulate your private affairs  
ingly, and so forth, and so forth.

To the Young Men

It is a common error to suppose  
that the young men of the world  
are all alike, and that they  
all have the same views of life  
and the same aims. But this is  
not the case. There are many  
different kinds of young men,  
and each kind has its own  
characteristics and its own  
aims. Some are ambitious, and  
want to make a name for  
themselves. Some are content  
with a quiet life, and want  
to be useful to their country.  
Some are devoted to science,  
and want to know the secrets  
of nature. Some are devoted  
to art, and want to create  
beauty. Some are devoted to  
commerce, and want to make  
money. Some are devoted to  
religion, and want to serve  
God. Each kind of young man  
has its own duties, and its  
own responsibilities. It is  
important for each young man  
to know his own kind, and  
to follow its own path.

## S E R M O N V.

J O B 21. 15.

*What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?*

**T**H E S E words, in Job's answer to his friends, may be considered as part of an objection, commonly made by disputatious men, against religion in general, and the duty of prayer in particular; taken from an opinion, that 'all things, relative to the condition of mankind, are unalterably fixed, not by God, but by a blind fatality, in a determined chain of causes and effects, that, consequently, all address, or application, to Him, must be utterly ineffectual.'

This opinion, they think justified by their experience of what passes in the world, by  
their

their observations on the ordinary course of worldly events; from which it appears, that little, if any, regard is paid, to men's different merits, or behavior.

Thus, as you read in several verses preceding the text, “ The wicked live, become  
“ old, yea are mighty in power. Their seed  
“ is established in their sight with them, and  
“ their offspring before their eyes. Their  
“ houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod  
“ of God upon them. They send forth  
“ their little ones, like a flock. They spend  
“ their days in wealth. They take the  
“ timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound  
“ of the organ. Therefore they say unto  
“ God, depart from us : for we desire not  
“ the knowledge of thy ways: What is the  
“ Almighty, that we should serve Him? Or  
“ what profit shall we have, if we pray unto  
“ him.”

The same belief in fate, is mentioned by the writer of Ecclesiastes. “ No man  
“ knoweth either love or hatred, by all that  
“ is before him. All things come alike to  
“ all. There is one event, to the righteous, and to the wicked : to the good, to  
“ the clean, and to the unclean : to him that  
sacrificeth,

“ sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not.  
 “ As is the godly, so is the sinner; he that  
 “ sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. There  
 “ is one event, to all.

Now here, before I enter further into the subject, let me remark: First, The fact itself, that “ all things come alike to all,” is but partially, and by no means universally, or even generally, true; as Job himself declares, in the verses that follow the text: Secondly, Every objection men can invent against the dispensations of heaven, arise entirely from their not understanding, or not attending to, those dispensations; which cannot possibly but be wise, as well as just; and will for ever remain so, when these vain cavils, with all the authors of them, shall have long been buried in silence.

To proceed, then. Prayer is perhaps the most obvious of human duties; founded upon this self-evident consideration; that  
 ‘ man is a creature, utterly insufficient for  
 ‘ his own happiness; a creature, who wants  
 ‘ the perpetual care of that superior power  
 ‘ which we call God, for his preservation,  
 ‘ and support.’ Whence he is under the strongest obligations, to learn and obey the  
 will



will of this sovereign power, to seek its favor, to implore its protection.

The beauty order and exquisite contrivance, that appear throughout the works of nature, abundantly prove God's universal government and providence. "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, may be clearly seen, by the things that are made; even his eternal power, and Godhead."

It is our duty therefore, to acknowledge his authority over us, and our subjection to him, in the very best manner we are able. And the best manner of doing this, is by praying to him: Whereby we declare our sense of the blessings we receive from him; of our continual dependence upon him, for our being, and enjoyments; of his all-sufficient wisdom and goodness, which dispose, as well as enable him, to give us whatever is most expedient for us, whether with respect to the present life, or a future one.

Again. Our inward feeling of our own necessities, naturally incites us to look out for a supply of them: While, at the same time, our experience demonstrates, beyond a doubt, that nothing, we can do, will effectually

fectually relieve them. We may sow, and plant: but God must give the increase.--- We may labor, in ten thousand other instances: but, without his assisting hand, we shall labor in vain. No wonder then, that the bare light of reason, should direct the generality of men, in all ages and nations, to betake themselves to God, by prayer; according to the ideas, they had severally formed of him.

Lastly. This essential duty of religion at large, is finally confirmed by the religion of Christ: Which commands, that "In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, we let our requests be made known unto God:" Who, as our blessed Lord expressly assures us, is always ready to hear and accept them. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him!"

Thus much being premised, I shall endeavor to give a satisfactory answer, to the two questions proposed in the text: I. By shewing you, who is the proper object of our devotion, and why he is so: II. By pointing

pointing out the benefits that arise from the duty of prayer ; as well to individuals, as to the community. III. The conclusion shall contain a few brief exhortations to the observance of it.

I, then. Respecting the object of our devotion, it seems the united voice of reason and religion, that ‘ All intelligent creatures ‘ should both apply for relief, and return ‘ thanks for what they already enjoy, to him ‘ that created them :’ to the supreme Lord of the world ; to the first cause of all life and happiness : who, as St. Paul not only piously but most philosophically teaches, “ Is above all, and through all, and in us “ all : for whom, and to whom, and by “ whom, are all things.” Whose universal presence makes him always near to every one of us : for “ in him we live and move, “ and have our being.” Whose perfect knowledge renders it impossible that our wants should be unnoticed, or our petitions unheard, by him. Whose infinite power is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. Whose goodness freely bestowed on us our life, with all its comforts ; and ever inclines him  
to

to grant our reasonable desires.----Lastly, whose mercy gives us hope; that, even when we have forsaken him, yet, if we will return to him, we shall be restored to his favor, and find compassion before him.

With regard then to prayer, thanksgiving, and every kind of religious adoration; none but the Almighty, has the smallest right to it. All address to any other Being, as the object of our devotion, is setting up other Gods beside him, who is the true, and only, God of nature.

You cannot be at a loss to know why the Deity has this sole claim to our religious services: Namely, that 'We derive what-ever we are, or possess, from him alone.' No being else, ever had, or ever can have, an independent dominion over us. They all are his creatures, as well as we; and, exclusively of him, can neither procure to us any happiness, nor avert from us any misery. He is the source of all power, and and therefore the ultimate author of all the good we receive; though it be often conveyed to us by the hands of inferior agents. In few words---No one, except himself, has, properly speaking, any thing to give

us :



us: Because he is single, the universal, proprietor of all things.

To acknowledge the unity of God, as 'common Father of all,' was the prime commandment in the Jewish law; and distinguished that religion, which was of his own appointment, from the false religions of the gentile world. The same is also a fundamental principle in the gospel of Christ. And to worship any other person, who can have no divine perfections in Himself, nor any divine authority over us, is deemed, throughout both the old and new testaments, to be "Departing from the living God, to be serving the creature instead of the Creator."

Hence you see the error of the heathen nations, who invented a multitude of different deities, with partial, local, attributes; and prayed to them, on partial, local, occasions. Hence it follows too, that all the prayers of christians, to angels, or saints, or the souls of holy men, are an error of the very same stamp; directly repugnant to the will of God, to the whole idea of genuine piety.

I know

I know it will be said, in defence of those who pray to angels, and to the spirits of good men departed; that they supplicate them as Mediators only; who are to intercede with God, or to intreat him on their behalf. But are not these Mediators, entirely of their own devising; in palpable opposition to the command of God, and to the tenor of scripture?---No one can appoint a mediator unto God, but God himself! And he has appointed Christ, the sole, the all-sufficient, Mediator; in whose name, he has ordered that all our prayers should be offered to him. "There is one God," says the great apostle, "and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." And, in his epistle to the Colossians, he gives us this explicit charge: "Whatsoever ye do, in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God the Father, by him."

Upon the whole, then. All adoration of any being, imaginary or real, except the supreme sovereign of the universe, is contrary even to the primitive religion of nature; but especially to the revealed religion of the gospel. And to worship him in any other

manner than through Christ the one Mediator, by whom he has enjoined us to present all our petitions, is utterly unwarrantable, and unchristian. It is robbing God of the honor, peculiarly due to him; and is one of the grossest superstitions, with which popery has deluded the world.

If further proof can be wanting, in a matter so evident; let us hear our blessed master's own words, to the author of all imposture: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." St. Paul, in the epistle just now referred to, expressly condemns this very practice of worshipping angels. St. John, in his Revelation, affirms; that, when he would have worshipped the angel, in gratitude for the great discoveries, which the angel had made to him; the angel strictly forbade him: "See thou do it not! For I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren: worship God."---These passages are direct and full to the point. They were delivered as a warning, against the corruption above-mentioned; and can leave no doubt with any man, who is not determined to pervert the plainest intention of scripture.

II. It is time therefore we should consider the advantages, which both individuals and society receive, from this duty of prayer to our common Creator: "What profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?"

I. As we are under every possible engagement to obey the will of God; whenever we fail, whenever we either neglect or transgress his will; it is absolutely fit, in the reason of things, that he should require, and that we should make a confession of our sins, humbly intreating his forgiveness of them; which forgiveness, we can, otherwise, never hope to obtain. And, beside the propriety of doing this, it is no less needful, no less beneficial, to ourselves. It is the best means of forming in our minds a just apprehension of their dreadful nature and consequences, with a firm resolution to shun them for the future.

There is nothing that can produce true repentance in us, like the appearing before God in prayer; and considering ourselves (which we must then do) as under his more immediate inspection. This will strike us with reverence, from the thought of his awful presence. It will quicken the sense



of our guilt, and fix that sense upon our hearts. It will bring our transgressions to remembrance, give us a due abhorrence of them, put us upon beginning to change our behavior, and amend our lives. The oftener we thus approach him, the more odious will our sins appear to us: the more clearly shall we see the necessity of forsaking them: and shall daily grow more able, not only to resist, but to overcome, them.

The first step towards a good life, is to review what is past; carefully to recollect, in what article of morals we are most deficient. Until we do this, it is impossible we should set about any reformation. The next thing is, to declare before God, an unfeigned sorrow for all our offences; --- and devoutly to implore his mercy upon them.

Prayer then, considered as a sincere acknowledgment of our former sins (which is indeed one capital branch of it) is requisite to procure the forgiveness of God; to work repentance, in ourselves; to settle us in a different and happier conduct, for the time to come.

2dly.

2dly. Prayer is not only needful towards the conversion of the wicked, but is highly serviceable even to the best of men. It preserves them in their virtues, in all their virtuous intentions;---renders their duty, habitual to their thoughts;---and guards them most effectually, against falling into what is sinful. It adds continual strength, to their piety; makes them constantly bear in mind their dependence upon God, and the infinite obligations they are under to him. Thus it employs their attention, upon the noblest objects; and prevents that dissipation, that want of reflection, which is the reigning cause of error and vice.

3dly. Prayer is an excellent relief, under all present afflictions; by creating in us a stedfast reliance on the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Governor, under whom we live: Which is the only thing, that can banish doubtful or desponding thoughts; that can carry a man through this changeable world, with peace and chearfulness.

4thly. Prayer to God, teaches us, both how to understand, and how to use, all temporal blessings. It makes us consider them, in their native light, as his gifts,

whose property alone they are, and to whom alone they belong; as talents, committed by him to our charge; which we must not waste upon our own pleasures or sensual gratifications, but conscientiously apply them to the promotion of his glory, [and the good of his creatures.

5thly. Hence I hope you see, that prayer is a most admirable duty of religion, and leads to the performance of all other duties. It not merely tends to reclaim the sinner, but to improve the good man in every laudable quality.

6thly. If we take religion, as it respects our present state only; since God is the author of our life, of all its comforts; prayer to him is requisite, for obtaining a supply of these desirable things, and such a measure of them as may enable us to pass our days with competent satisfaction. Or, if we abound in them, and live in plenty; thankfulness to our benefactor, is the most likely means, to secure his favor, to insure the continuance of his bounty.

7thly. As this duty is so important to individuals, it cannot but be equally beneficial to society. As it cultivates religion  
and

and virtue among particular persons, it is of the utmost consequence to mankind at large. As it makes us obedient to the laws of God, it makes us ready to obey the laws of man, to discharge our several social duties, in our different stations, offices, and employments. Sound piety (for about such only I am speaking) is the foundation of all morality, of all regularity, all good behavior. Therefore the fear of God, is the firmest defence, any nation can have; while atheistical profaneness, is a certain prognostic of its ruin; and must, before long, end in its overthrow. Where this pious fear prevails, as it ought; it establishes mutual confidence, between man and man: it heightens public credit: renders a people respectable among their neighbours, flourishing, and happy. Wherever it is discarded, there follows a contempt of all government; a general want of principle, of regard to each other's welfare; tumults and disorders, without number or name; "confusion, and every evil work."

When any people serve their Maker, to the best of their power; they may reasonably hope for his special protection; for



his blessing upon them, as a nation, or in their public character, Whereas, when they shew no reverence of himself; when they despise, and trample upon, his laws; what can they expect, but that he, in return, will forsake them; will give them up to the natural effects, or inflict upon them the just punishment, of their vices and impiety!

III. Having dwelt thus long on the advantages that arise from prayer, to private persons, as well as to public bodies; my exhortation to the practice of it, needs be but short: And the application of what has been said, to ourselves, is extremely easy.

1. Let us be constant in our attendance on the worship of God, for our own sakes, for the improvement of our own minds: that we may have peace with him; may make him our friend; and enjoy a quiet conscience, from the certainty of receiving a blessing at his hand.

2dly. Let us observe this duty, not barely with a view to ourselves, but for the benefit of others: that "our light may shine before men;" that we may become  
the

the instruments of "turning many to righteousness," of advancing the honor of religion, and the salvation of mankind. This is a glorious work! To contribute towards both the present and the eternal happiness of our fellow-creatures.

You know that divine maxim of St. Paul: "No man liveth to himself; and no man dieth to himself." None of our virtues, or our vices, terminate in our own persons; but inevitably affect the people, with whom we converse; our children, servants, relations, acquaintance, neighbors. The whole community, in short, feels the effects of them; and is profited, or injured, in some degree or other, by every thing we do. Therefore a sincerely devout man, is a general benefactor; while every immoral, profane creature, is a pest, and a nuisance, to human society.

It is an old remark, that "example goes further than precept; or that practise has far more weight than argument." And there is not an instance of any duty, wherein example discovers greater influence; than in this, of the public worship of God. Indeed example is the only thing, that can uphold it, among the vast majority of mankind; and the want  
of

of example, the single thing, that can overturn it. Let us then remember the apostle's excellent advice to the Hebrews, upon this very occasion: "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but to exhort one another, daily; to consider the common cause of the gospel; to encourage each other, unto love, and all good works."

As for the question in the text, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him;" any plain christian can give an unanswerable reply to it,---"He is our Creator. We are indebted to him, for our being; for all that we have, or can enjoy, in this state, or in any other. He continually supports us; can make us miserable, ten thousand ways; or destroy us, if he pleases, the very next moment. All power is his, in heaven, and earth. In his hand are the issues of life and death, of good and evil. For these reasons, he has an indisputable right, to our services: We are bound both to fear and to love him, by the united ties, of interest, and of duty."

These reasons, therefore, let us ever bear in mind: Let us regulate our manners, by them; and not give up a most evident duty, for

any dark, confused objections, against the divine Providence: Of which objections, our own ignorance, or daring impiety, is the only possible foundation. Let us never presume to condemn, what we do not comprehend; but walk humbly before God, in faith, and righteousness. These will expose us to no dangers, will lead us into no errors; but will conduct us to what should be the end of all our pursuits, the salvation of our souls.

4thly. I shall conclude, with some directions, concerning the duty of prayer, from the incomparable author of ecclesiasticus. " Say  
 " not, I have sinned: and what harm hath  
 " happened unto me? For, though the Lord  
 " is long-suffering; yet he will in no wise  
 " let thee go.---Be not without fear, to add  
 " sin to sin: and say not, his mercy is great:  
 " he will be pacified for the multitude of my  
 " sins. For mercy and wrath both come from  
 " him; and his indignation resteth upon sin-  
 " ners.---My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no  
 " more; but ask pardon for thy former sins.  
 " Make no delay, to turn to the Lord; and put  
 " not off, from day to day. For in thy security  
 " thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the  
 " day of vengeance.---Return to the Lord;  
 " make



“ make thy prayer before his face, and forsake  
“ thy sins. For great is his loving-kindness;  
“ and his compassion to such, as turn to him  
“ in holiness.---Let nothing hinder thee, to  
“ pay thy vow in due time; and defer not  
“ till death, to be justified.---Before thou  
“ prayest, prepare thyself; and be not as one,  
“ that tempteth the Lord.---Forgive thy  
“ neighbor the wrong, that he hath done  
“ thee: So shall thy sins also be forgiven,  
“ when thou prayest.---He that washeth  
“ himself, after touching a dead body; if he  
“ touch it again, what availeth his washing?  
“ So is it with a man, that fasteth for his  
“ sins; and then goeth again, and doeth the  
“ same. Who will hear his prayer, or what  
“ doth his humbling profit him? But he  
“ that serveth the Lord, shall be accepted  
“ with favor; and his prayer shall reach to  
“ heaven!”

To the King Eternal.

S E R M O N VI.

## S E R M O N VI.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give, in exchange for his soul?*

**I**N some verses immediately preceding the Text, our blessed Savior had been warning his Disciples, that "He must shortly suffer many things from the Elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes;" that "He should be put to death, and be raised again the third day." This discourse he found to be neither relished, nor indeed understood, by the people about him;--- who had all along entertained very different notions, concerning the purpose of Christ's coming, and the nature of his kingdom.--- St. Peter in particular "Began to rebuke him,

“ him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord :  
“ This shall not be unto thee.” Upon  
which our Lord, in the twenty-fourth verse,  
declares to them more explicitly : “ If any  
“ man will come after me, let him deny  
“ himself, take up his cross, and follow  
“ me.” The meaning is, ‘ Not only I  
‘ myself must suffer, but so must you like-  
‘ wise ;---if ye will be my disciples indeed,  
‘ and not abandon the master ye have pro-  
‘ fessed to support. To be a Christian is  
‘ not, as you flatter yourselves, to enter into  
‘ a state of ease or independence ; but will ne-  
‘ cessarily expose both you and many others,  
‘ to persecution for righteousness sake, in  
‘ defence of the doctrine I was sent to  
‘ establish. And be not surprised at what  
‘ I tell you : do not look upon the terms,  
‘ as unreasonable, or cruel : but be assured,  
‘ that whosoever will save his life, by a  
‘ cowardly desertion of me and my reli-  
‘ gion, shall finally, and most deservedly,  
‘ lose it : Whereas, he that will lose his  
‘ life, by bravely maintaining the cause of  
‘ my gospel, shall find it, to life eternal.’  
Then come the words of the Text. “ For  
“ what is a man profited, if he shall gain  
“ the

“ the whole world, and lose his own soul ?”  
That is, ‘ What would it avail a man, if,  
‘ by deserting me, by renouncing his faith  
‘ in me, he could gain the whole earth ; ---  
‘ provided that gain would bring upon  
‘ him a loss, of infinitely greater concern.’

This was the particular occasion, on  
which the Text was at first introduced ; ---  
and is the particular sense of it, as it stands  
in the Chapter before us. But the words  
are manifestly capable of a general accepta-  
tion. It is an undeniable truth, that ‘ No  
‘ wicked man whatsoever, no sinner of any  
‘ denomination, can possibly be profited by  
‘ obtaining the whole world through his  
‘ wickedness ; if such an acquisition will  
‘ terminate in the loss of his own soul.’

In this general light therefore, I shall  
consider the Text ; and shall attempt to  
shew you, ‘ How little all profligate per-  
‘ sons know their own good ; how fatally  
‘ they mistake their own interest.’ --- The  
conclusion, in favour of Religion, and a vir-  
tuous life, will then lie open to every one’s  
own reflection.

And, 1. To lose our soul, is not to  
lose our Being ; but, which is a loss in-  
comparably



comparably more dreadful, to lose our happiness, to incur the displeasure of God, to undergo in the next world, by divine appointment, the eternal penalties of the sins we have committed in the present one.

Suppose therefore that a man, by some violent measures, could secure to himself all the wealth of the Indies: Suppose that he could even make himself Lord of this whole globe, of all the creatures that dwell upon the face of it, for the very precarious term of human life: What would this false glory profit him, nay would it not be an unspeakable injury to him, if it were to be followed by perpetual punishment in a world to come?---In this case, you see, death would soon put an end to the man's enjoyments:---but the longest period of time would put no end to his torments. Wherefore, says the text most pathetically, "What shall a man give, in exchange for his soul?" What can you conceive to be an adequate amends, for such a loss? What equivalent can the powers of imagination devise, or can this world possibly afford him? What are all the emoluments that can be received, all the pleasures that can  
be

be tasted, in the circle of a few years ; when set against the happiness or misery of eternity ? If his iniquities could procure him the gold of Ophir, he must quickly leave every penny of it behind him : He could carry nothing away with him, but a guilty conscience ; the only possession, that will pursue such wretches into another state.

In brief, then, it is self-evident to them who believe the Bible, that were it practicable for a man, by an uninterrupted series of villainy, to become monarch of all the earth, sole proprietor of all its delights ;---instead of a gainer, he would be an infinite sufferer :---because he must purchase this transient empire, by debarring himself for ever from his supreme good. This great truth, duly attended to, would preserve the public tranquillity ;---would prolong the lives of thousands, who fall an untimely sacrifice to the ambition of a few lawless men.

But, 2dly. I beg you will remember, that no individual, nor any number of individuals combined, can possibly gain the whole world, or any thing like the whole world, by the most successful course of

wickedness. It is a very inconsiderable spot of earth, that the richest man is owner of, whether acquired by just or by unjust measures. The real wants of nature are but few, and lie in a small compass. All the artificial wants ingenuity can invent, will require a very moderate portion of the globe, to satiate and to cloy them. For when once you indulge beyond a certain limit, all appetite ceases; nature herself is overpowered, and surfeited. Not to insist upon the shortness of life; or the endless variety of providential causes, that stop the wicked in their career, and make it impossible for the mightiest of them to subdue a fiftieth part of the habitable world. Not to mention likewise, that even the little they do conquer, is shared with innumerable petty Lords and oppressors under them, that are the odious instruments of their tyranny.

As for rascals of inferior size, and ordinary talents; it is a very humble pittance, to which they can pretend to aspire. Their gains are composed of very slender articles. Their ability to do mischief, to encroach upon the rights of others, is confined within very narrow bounds. A paltry sum of money,

or

or a few ill-gotten acres of the vast surface we tread upon, is all that they can ever hope to become masters of. Yet for these poor considerations, for this exceedingly unequal exchange, they bid adieu to their happiness, and give up their own souls.

To a person of tender sentiments it is melancholy to reflect, by what sorry motives the generality of thoughtless creatures are led, to offend their Maker, and undo themselves. Could you grasp, in the hand of rapine and avarice, the whole extent from pole to pole; it would all shrink to a point, when valued with the loss of your own soul. But to lose your soul for advantages so circumscribed, as those which most of us are able to attain; is madness, in the extreme! The only way to prevent that loss, is to implore the forgiveness of God; speedily to repent of the injustice, you have committed; to make the best satisfaction you can, to the parties you have injured.

But, 3dly. The most lamentable fact of all, remains still to be related: Namely, that the majority of wicked men are so far from gaining the whole world by their wickedness, that they do not gain the least



particle of it, and only demonstrate the ar-  
rant folly of the projects, by which they  
mean to promote themselves.----Some of  
them openly transgress the laws of their  
country, are publicly punished and disgra-  
ced. Many, who escape the laws, forfeit  
all character, create themselves enemies in  
every quarter, are discountenanced and de-  
spised by every mortal around them. Which,  
added to a consciousness of their own  
misconduct, makes them, if they have any  
feeling left, despise themselves;---renders  
them contemptible, in their own sight.

Now I say these men, with sundry others  
whom your daily observation will suggest  
to you, are profited by their sins, in no  
one tolerable sense. They plainly blast their  
present, as well their future interest. They  
suffer for their vices, both on this side the  
grave, and beyond it.

Indeed nothing is so unaccountable as the  
behaviour of divers persons, not merely in  
the eye of religion, but of common worldly  
prudence. What numbers are there, that  
might acquire all the good things they  
want, or could enjoy; if they would only  
seek them by direct, by legal, measures.---

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In the room of which, they take such perverse, injudicious, steps; as must inevitably defeat their design, and lead them far away from the point they wish to arrive at. All people of this stamp, bestow abundantly more pains to make themselves infamous and miserable, than would be sufficient to make them both reputable and happy.

For let me advertise you, that the gain, forbidden in the text, is not honest, but scandalous gain. It is that "unrighteous mammon," which is the fruit, not of ingenuous dealing, but of illicit practices; not of sober industry, or fair trading, but of falsehood, fraud, extortion. The gospel prohibits no man, from reaping the benefit of his own useful labor. It forbids no man to advance himself in the world, or to better his condition, by lawful methods; but by such devices only, as are the reverse of all law, and, for that very reason, almost always destroy themselves, draw temporal as well as eternal judgments upon us.

The common saying therefore, that "honesty is the best policy," which we so often repeat, and so little regard, you will find to be unexceptionably true; in secular,

as well as in spiritual things ; with respect to the life which now is, as well as that which is to come. Happy beyond expression should we be, could all orders of people be persuaded to take this maxim for their guide, to regulate their several proceedings by it !

But here lies the capital difficulty---Not to make men understand the doctrines, or acknowledge the obligations, of religion ; but to induce them to consider these things, so as to act accordingly. Transitory schemes, and present objects, engage our whole attention. A few sensual gratifications, or a little dirty lucre, engross all our thoughts ; unmoved by distant, though far superior, blessings. Bad education gives us wrong notions, which are the natural parents of wrong practices.

The end then, the invaluable excellency, of religious instruction, is to furnish our minds with just ideas of ourselves, of the things that are about us ; to moderate our love of the world ; to raise our affections to the things that are above ; to teach us, that the proper happiness of a christian is a pure conscience, a prospect of the divine favor, and  
of

of the unfading joys of heaven. All which our Lord has here summed up, in these few significant words: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give, in exchange for his soul?"

4thly. Enough perhaps may have been already said, to justify the text; to convince you, that sinners offend as grossly against themselves, against their own souls, as they can do against their maker.

But of this infatuation, this blindness to their own welfare, there is one cause; which, though I have often hinted it to you, I cannot forbear enlarging upon. The epidemical, the fundamental error, of wicked men, appears to me, to be this. They all seem to ground their actions upon a very false presumption, that 'our duty and our interest are two quite different matters; that if we constantly adhere to the former, we must often necessarily desert the latter.' It is from this fatal mistake, that one part of mankind are preying upon the other; the poor plundering the rich, the rich depressing the poor. Hence it is, that short-sighted creatures expect to be mighty gainers, to do



themselves prodigious service, by flying in the face of their own reason, and the express commands of God: than which expectation nothing, in all nature, can be more extravagant or absurd.

In truth. The common crude indigested notions of self-interest, are the nursery of all evil; the bane of every thing that is generous, or good. They are the destruction of all honor, of all private friendship, of all public virtue. They are the source of all the strife and contention, all the hatred and ill-will, that poison the comforts of society. Whereas with a christian (I might safely say with every man, but particularly with a christian) interest and duty go hand in hand: They can never interfere, nor ever be divided. An honest man is the happiest man, even with regard to the present life; but is undoubtedly so upon the whole, or with regard to eternity. Knavery and licentiousness will generally ruin you, in this world; but they will infallibly ruin you, in the next.

If a Christian therefore knows any thing to be his duty, never let him stand a moment to demur, whether it be his interest:

For

For with him they are absolutely one and the same. God has joined them together, and no power on earth can put them asunder. You may fancy many things to be your interest (it is our sad delusion, that we do fancy so) but you will find nothing to be really your interest, except the fear of God, and the love of your neighbour, which equally concern us all. Upon this basis, the Gospel is built. If we are deceived in this, our faith is vain, all scripture falls to the ground.

Here then you see, what is the lesson, which we ought all to learn, from our infancy; what is the lecture, which every parent should read to his children, should instil into their minds from their cradles; namely, that 'To be good, to do their duty, is their certain way to happiness; 'to be wicked, and to transgress it, their sure road to misery;' that 'The one will procure them the approbation of God, and the esteem of all wise men; while the other will utterly exclude them from both.'

This noble lesson, if you fix it firmly in their breasts, will carry them through the world

world with innocence and safety. It will arm them against the temptations, to which all ages are exposed. It will protect them from crimes, that will prove hurtful to others, but pernicious to themselves. To train them up in these sentiments, will be a more parental kindness, a fairer patrimony to leave them, than the largest estate, than the riches of the whole east. Pious principles, and a virtuous education, surpass all earthly treasures. They will be an inheritance for your children, when this world, with all its fopperies, all its gaudy honors, shall be no more.

That affectionate exhortation of Moses to the Israelites in the Book of Deuteronomy, is a sacred rule for every Christian Father, and master of a family. "Hear, O  
"Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.---  
"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God  
"with all thy soul, with all thy might.  
"These words which I command thee this  
"day, shall be in thine heart; and thou  
"shalt teach them diligently unto thy  
"children.----Thou shalt talk of them,  
"when thou sittest in thine house, and  
"when thou walkest by the way; when  
"thou



"thou liest down, and when thou risest up." It is the high character given by Almighty God himself, of the great Patriarch Abraham: "I know him; that he will command his children, and his household, after him:---and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." An eminent example, that was recorded for your imitation!---Therefore blessed will ye be, if ye tread in the steps of this father of the faithful!

5thly. In the verse immediately following the text, our Savior demonstrates, by the clearest argument, that 'Each man's duty must for ever be his interest.' "The Son of Man shall come, in the glory of his Father: and then" (mark the next words) "He shall reward every man, according to his works."

Now here, I say, our Lord points out the strongest reason, why 'No man can possibly be a gainer by his vices;' why 'every man must necessarily be an immense gainer by his virtues.' Every man, you see, is to be dealt with, is to be finally disposed of, "according to his works."---'As he has revered or violated the commandments



ments of God, as he has observed or neglected the precepts of morality; as he has been just or unjust, merciful or cruel, devout or profane.' This is the doctrine, uniformly taught by Christ, and by all his apostles, in every page of the New Testament.

6thly, then. As the result of all I have said upon the subject, you may perceive, at one comprehensive view, what is the purpose of true religion; what, if it were duly practised, would be its certain effect; namely, To promote national as well as personal good; to promote them both, by the same means; to unite the several classes of mankind in one common principle, in one common bond of piety to their maker and charity to each other.

Irreligion and immorality have a quite contrary tendency. They divide the wills, the hearts, of men. They render us totally indifferent to one another's well-being, nay create eternal variance between us; "lift every man's hand against his brother, and his brother's hand against him." They set up selfish designs, and private regards, in direct opposition to the public welfare; in  
opposition

opposition to the authority of our governors, in defiance of all the subjection we owe to God or man. The consequence is, what it cannot but be. They break the quiet of the world, and fill it with calamities in every shape; with treachery, thefts, and robberies; with war and confusion, at home as well as abroad. All which the gospel of peace was intended to suppress; to make us happy together, both here and for evermore.

That this heavenly intention may prevail, and the gracious ends of it be answered, throughout the whole earth; ought to be the prayer, and, as far as in him lies, the earnest endeavour, of every benevolent man.

To God, only wise.

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 in defiance of all the injunction we owe to  
 God or man. The consequence is, what it  
 cannot but be. I lay break the quiet of  
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 shape; with crosses, trials, and tribulations,  
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 ing, and the glorious ends of it be answered,  
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 the prayer and aspires in their hearts, the ear-  
 nest endeavour of every benevolent man.

in regard to the R.R. Wagon, in  
in relation giving all its contents to  
the R.R. Co.

[ 111 ]

## S E R M O N VII.

PROVERBS, XXX. 8, 9.

*Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me  
with food convenient for me: lest I be full,  
and deny thee; and say, who is the Lord?  
Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name  
of my God in vain.*

**T**HE wish of a wise man, with regard to  
the present life, has always been reckon-  
ed rather a nice thing to compose. Gene-  
rally speaking, it has contained greatly too  
much; and sometimes, though indeed very  
rarely, too little: for we are extremely  
cautious not to err, on the latter side of the  
question. But whoever has been mistaken,  
in this critical point; Solomon is allowed  
to have set us all right, by the short prayer  
in the text, which he ascribes to Agur  
the son of Jakeh: "Give me neither po-  
verty



“ verty, nor riches : feed me with food,  
“ convenient for me.”

In discoursing upon which celebrated words, I shall, I, Consider the petition itself ; with the reasons that Agur gives, for making it. II, I shall offer to you a few remarks, which may further help to illustrate the subject ; and may enable you, particularly as Christians, to form a just idea of the world we live in.

I, then. Let us take notice of the prayer itself :---“ Give me neither poverty, nor “ riches :” Place me in a middle situation of life ; distant alike from both extremes of worldly fortune. “ Feed me with food, “ convenient for me.” Grant me such a measure of good things, as nature requires ; such, as will refresh and satisfy, but not oppress, her ; such as will at the same time be consistent, both with pleasure, and with health.---This is the meaning of Agur’s request to God, considered in itself, without looking any further.----The moral and religious reasons, for which he prefers a moderate station of life, are contained in the following verse : “ Lest I be full, and deny “ thee, and say, who is the Lord :”---Lest

too great affluence should spoil my temper, and my manners;---should make me, not only proud or insolent to men, but forgetful and contemptuous of thee my God."---

"Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of the Lord in vain : " Lest poverty, with the train of necessities that attend it, should urge me to infringe upon the property of my neighbour ; and then to be guilty of wilful perjury, in order to conceal my crimes from the world, or to escape the present punishment I might otherwise suffer.

This general sense of the text being too evident, to require a more formal explanation ; I shall only observe to you, before I proceed to make any particular remarks upon it ; \* How exceedingly striking, and \* familiar, the two foregoing reasons, for the petition, appear ; how constantly we are complaining about these same bad effects of riches and poverty ;---how daily we see them come to pass, in common life.

II. Therefore, without longer delay, what has been already said, is sufficient to supply us with many religious and useful

reflections, as the second intended branch of my subject.

I, 'If such are the dangers, that accompany both extremes of fortune; how kind 'is it in providence, to put the generality 'of us (indeed as large a number of us, as 'was possible) into the middle, and safer, 'conditions of life.' For, with regard to poverty, really such, and properly so called, it is almost always our own fault, if we are reduced to it.---It is almost always owing, to our own indolence, or negligence, or wasteful profuseness; of all which, poverty is the natural offspring. Where there is one man, labouring under inevitable distress; there are abundantly more than I can without sorrow name, who madly drive themselves into it: In which declaration, I have hardly any doubt that all impartial observers of what passes amongst us, will readily join with me. So likewise, with respect to excessive wealth; it is, for by far the greater part, of our own sinful procuring: sometimes, by sordid avarice: as often, perhaps much oftener now a-days, by acts of iniquity and oppression.---In both the extremes above mentioned, God

is

is manifestly out of the question; and the guilt, as well as the misery, of every such situation, is entirely our own. He has graciously fulfilled his part, towards us.--- He has graciously provided, what is both suitable and sufficient for us all; if we are but wise enough to understand it, to receive it thankfully, and to make a proper use of it.

But, 2dly. Allowing (which I do not pretend to deny) that men are sometimes providentially, or through unavoidable misfortunes, poor; they are, however, under no compulsion to "Steal, or to take their Creator's sacred name in vain." God forbid! They still have religion and conscience to teach them, that they ought cheerfully to acquiesce in the dispensations of heaven!--- that neither poverty, nor any thing else but his own free choice, can make a man a robber, or a blasphemer. They ought to consider what they suffer, as the trial of their patience and obedience; as the exercise of their virtue, here; as the means by which they may attain eternal felicity, hereafter: when their poverty shall be changed

I 2 into



into sterling riches, and their sufferings into everlasting joy.

Again. Whenever a man comes to great wealth, in the ordinary course of inheritance, or from any unexpected causes; I appeal to his own heart, whether, instead of "Denying his Maker, and saying who is the "Lord," he is not under the strongest possible obligation to piety and gratitude!-- His most obvious duty is, to look upon providence as his sovereign benefactor; and to employ his wealth to his Creator's glory, by doing service with it to his fellow-creatures; by being "Rich in good works, "ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

The inference is clear, and exceedingly well deserves the attention of you all: namely, that 'neither poverty nor riches are in 'themselves, or necessarily and essentially, 'evil; that, on the contrary, the former by 'being dutifully submitted to, the latter by 'being wisely applied, will infallibly become 'the instrument of our supreme good.' Which is equally true of all the other matters, that commonly pass for articles of prosperous or adverse fortune. 'They are neither  
ther

‘ther a blessing nor a curse, if we ourselves  
 ‘do not make them so.’ Whatever comes  
 from God and his providence, is sent for our  
 benefit; though we may, and do every hour  
 of the day, pervert it into an occasion of  
 mischief.

3dly. Let me remark to you, that no  
 post, no office, no rank of life, is exempted  
 from temptations, or is incapable of sin.  
 Men may either be enticed by others, or  
 may foolishly draw themselves, into wicked-  
 ness, into injustice or perjury, in all condi-  
 tions whatsoever; in the middle and least-  
 exposed stations, as well as in either of the  
 two extremes. The general solution of  
 which is plain, and what I have often men-  
 tioned to you on sundry occasions: namely,  
 that ‘our present life is a state of proba-  
 ‘tion: that, without a power of sinning,  
 ‘there could be no virtue; nor, without  
 ‘temptations to sin, any exertion of that  
 ‘virtue: that every man, who holds fast  
 ‘his integrity under such scenes of trial  
 ‘will be rewarded, and they who forfeit it  
 ‘punished, in a future state of recompense.’  
 This great doctrine was always known, more  
 or less, to people of all ages, of all religions:

but it is now fully declared to us, who are blest with the religion of the gospel; which has perfected what nature or former revelations had taught, has brought life and immortality completely to light.

4thly. Let every creature of you especially remember the two important reasons, which Solomon here gives, why you should carefully avoid what I call wilful poverty. The first is, that you may not be tempted to injure your neighbor; the second, that you may not be in danger of profaning the name of your God, by complaints against his providence, by perjury, by blasphemy, and consequently of incurring a ten thousand times sorer evil than any you could suffer from the deepest poverty.

On the opposite hand, let us pay an equal attention to the Royal Teacher's argument, why we should never covet enormous riches: namely, that they are so often found to sink us into an impious forgetfulness of the supreme power, who made us; who continually preserves us, and "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." That is, in different words, they tend to ruin our moral and religious characters; which are of unspeakably greater

greater value, of infinitely higher importance to us, than all the gold of Arabia, than all the tawdry wealth of both the Indies, if we could possibly acquire it !

Wherefore in this, as in all other like instances, we have a direct and unerring rule,--  
 ‘ bravely to withstand every temptation, that  
 ‘ offers itself; but never to court, never to  
 ‘ seek for, any.’ You need not be told, It is a part of our christian prayer to almighty God, that “ He will not lead us into  
 “ temptation.” For which reason, we certainly ought, with our utmost vigilance, to guard against it ourselves ! Believe me, we shall frequently find even this alone, an arduous work ; and happy shall we be, if we can do it effectually ! Happy shall we be, if we can defeat the malice of our spiritual enemies, by wisely preventing their attacks upon us ! But,

5thly. Without ever once considering the subject in a spiritual light, or as it regards a future state ; Agur’s prayer, I mean the doctrine it conveys, if duly put in practice, would be of inexpressible present advantage ; both to each individual, and to the whole community.----First, Respecting the



man himself; it is an undeniable maxim, that 'All happiness is seated within us;---' that it consists in the having just sentiments of things; of the world about us, 'and our personal situation in it; of human nature, and human life.' Wherever these sentiments are wanting, or bear no influence; neither riches, nor any other circumstances of external prosperity, can produce internal comfort. Money, to a mind that has a greedy and irrational love of it, is precisely like food to a sickly, but yet voracious, appetite: it nourishes the distemper, not the man. It is like drink to a person in a dropsy: instead of cooling the heat, or abating the thirst, it aggravates and inflames them. Hence comes the remark, which you all perfectly know, and repeatedly make;----that 'The most wealthy misers, are the poorest, the wretchedest creatures, upon the face of the earth!'--- Secondly, with relation to society; I beg that I may ask you, or that ye will ask yourselves; what is it, but "The being dissatisfied with the food convenient for us," which incites private men to defraud, and to prey upon, each other? What, but the

the same restless spirit, in states and princes, is the origin of wars abroad; or of dissensions, and public distractions at home? In fine. The not knowing when we have enough, or the not being contented with it when we certainly have it, is the fatal source of almost all the calamities we bring upon ourselves, and all the injuries we suffer by the iniquity of others, in every character or capacity, in every degree or department of life.-----

“ Whence come wars and fightings amongst “ us,” is a question, that will admit but one answer: “ Even of our lusts that war, “ in our members,” against the dictates of our reason, and the commandments of God. This I believe is a truth, universally acknowledged; how little so ever it may otherwise be regarded. And the virtue of contentment, like many other excellent qualities, has at least the honor of being applauded by all men; if it can obtain nothing further from them. It has not a single opponent, in speculation, or in profession; though, God knows, but very few advocates, in practice!

6thly. I shall offer no apology, for frequently laying before you the present advantages

vantages (I say the present advantages) which would arise to mankind, from a faithful observance of the duties prescribed by religion: because I think these advantages, not indeed the capital, yet surely a material, argument, in its behalf; perhaps, to many people, the most forcible one, that can be produced. And I have no business, nor the smallest inclination, to aim at novelty; but at the promotion of our common welfare, of a peaceable and orderly behaviour amongst us. This ought to be the object of all discourses, delivered in places of divine worship; and I very heartily wish, it were more generally made so! Such was St. Paul's idea of the pastoral office, as his own charge to Titus expressly declares :---“ These things I will “ that thou affirm constantly; that they “ who believe in God,” and in his revealed word, “ be careful to maintain good works. “ For these things,” says the Apostle, “ are profitable unto men.” He was to affirm these things constantly, according to our translation. He was never to be weary of inculcating them himself, nor ever to suppose

suppose that Christians can be weary of hearing them.

7thly. I must not omit a reflection, highly proper in itself, as well as closely connected with what I have said in the foregoing Section: Namely, 'The peculiar present misery of that poverty, which men, knowingly, and with open eyes, create to themselves.'---Solomon, you remember, in the fourteenth Chapter of this Book of Proverbs, tells us, that "The rich hath many friends; while the poor is hated, even by his own neighbour." This is too true, even of the poverty that comes upon us by necessity, or through irresistible misfortunes. Every mean condition, however innocently so, is too apt to be treated with hatred, or at least with contempt. How justly odious, then, must that beggary appear, which is solely the fruit of our own criminal follies! Such a man not only is despised by his neighbours, but ought to be despised. He not barely meets with no compassion, but he really merits none. He not merely has no friends; but, which is infinitely worse, he does not deserve to have any. His case, in short, is almost exactly  
fimilar



similar to that of the prodigal son, in our Savior's admired parable: "who would fain  
"have filled his belly with the husks that  
"the swine did eat: and no man gave unto  
"him." No! as they had all along been  
eye-witnesses of his profligate extravagance,  
they very wisely reserved their charity for  
those, who wanted it as much, and were a  
great deal more worthy of it. If this be  
not indeed an abject situation; I will ven-  
ture to pronounce, that there cannot one be  
found, or be conceived to exist, under the  
sun!

Here therefore you see not only an in-  
teresting, but an immediate reason, why, in-  
stead of running into, you should use every  
possible means to shun, this sinful poverty:  
under which, you will have no pity from  
others, nor any thing but compunction and  
remorse from yourself! Such poverty is one  
notorious instance of the temporal unhappi-  
ness, wherein men involve themselves, by  
irreligion and vice; and which they would  
most undoubtedly avoid, if they could be  
persuaded to take christianity for their guide;  
to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in  
"the present world." For your belief of  
this,

this, no other faith is requisite, but a faith in daily experience, in visible and innumerable matters of fact !

8thly, and Lastly. The lessons to be drawn from this instructive text of scripture, may be thus briefly summed up. In all our conduct, we should endeavor to discard the prevailing false, deceitful notions, of profit, and of pleasure ; to keep our desires in the happy medium, between avarice and luxury.----We should suffer, neither riches to elevate, nor poverty to depress, us ; neither the former to puff us up into pride, nor the latter to sink us into despair.

To the prayer of Agur, we should add the superior advice of Christ, and his apostles. " Take heed, and beware of covetousness," says our blessed Master. " For a man's life," (the health, the length, the reputation, the enjoyment, of his life) " consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ;" says St. Paul. " Having therefore food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they who are  
" deter-

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“determined at all events to be rich, and  
“they who by licentiousness make them-  
“selves poor, fall into various tempta-  
“tions, and hurtful lusts, that drown the  
“soul in perdition.----For a groveling  
“love of money on one side, and a riotous  
“disregard of it on the other, are the  
“two grand principles of human miscon-  
“duct.”

Whether of them is the more repugnant to the spirit of christianity, and to the well-being of society; is a point, that would bear a pretty long debate. The people of the present age, as far as we can judge by their practice, will give their voice utterly against penuriousness, in favor of profuseness: How judiciously, or how justly, I shall not waste time, to inquire; but shall conclude, with exhorting you, once more, to fly from them both; and to follow the direction our Savior gives us, as the moral of his parable, of the Unjust Steward.----  
“Let the poor among you by honest industry, the rich by generous humanity,  
“make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when death shall

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'shall have removed them from these  
'earthly mansions, God may receive them  
'into everlasting habitations.'

To whom, only wise.

S E R M O N VIII.



Two excellent decisions were made by the committee, and the committee was very much interested in the results of the study.

1871

To whom only will

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Let the pear grow up by itself.

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S E R M O N VIII.

MATTHEW, V. 9.

*Blessed are the Peace-makers: for they shall be called the Children of God.*

**S**INCE a desire to make peace, is one of these moral excellencies, which are the beauty of religion itself, as well as the highest ornament of the mind that possesses them; upon which therefore our Lord, in this chapter, pronounces a special blessing; it is consequently a subject, that most truly deserves your attention: and I purpose to treat it in the following manner:

I. I shall lay before you what appear to me the proper characters of this sweet disposition, and give you the best description I can of the men who are here stiled Peace-makers.

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II. I shall take particular notice of the reward, which our Savior is pleased to promise them; namely, that "they shall be called the Children of God."

III. When this is done, I shall make such an application of the whole, as I hope will be useful to our conduct; such as will help to cultivate amongst us that mutual love of peace and of each other, without which we can have no tolerable enjoyment even of the present life, nor the least prospect of a blessing in that which is to come.

I. Now peaceableness, or an uniform inclination to live upon amicable terms with all mankind, from Religious and Christian motives, being, in strictness, not a single virtuous quality, but rather the union of many virtues, or the happy result of such an union; I shall, accordingly, shew you the several virtues by which it is formed; and point out its several parts, or branches, with all the perspicuity I am able.

1. then. Let me remark, that the prime ingredient in this lovely composition, is modesty; and that the Peace-maker, before all things, must be a man of humility; sensible of his own defects; not confident of his

his own understanding ; not apt to " think  
" of himself more highly than he ought to  
" think," and therefore not obstinate in  
maintaining his opinions, or vehement in  
propagating them.

By such an humble spirit, he will be sure  
to avoid one notorious cause of contention ;  
which is the never-failing offspring of im-  
moderate self-love, and self-conceit.

2dly. As this good man is conscious of  
his own deficiencies, he is never bitter in his  
censures, nor severe in his reflections, upon  
other men (all such bitterness being an in-  
fallible token of a bad, of an hardened,  
mind) but makes every reasonable allowance  
for their errors, or misconduct.---As he is  
not conceited of his own understanding, he  
sets a fair value upon the abilities and ac-  
complishments of his neighbor. As he is  
not over-fond of himself or of his own no-  
tions, he is always open to conviction ; al-  
ways pays a becoming respect, both to the  
persons, and to the sentiments, of those  
about him. Thus he keeps clear, of giving  
them offence, of provoking their resentment  
by ill-natured contemptuous usage, and so



laying in matter for endless hatred and animosity.

3dly. The real friend and encourager of peace, is likewise an honest, a just man, a lover of truth. He is satisfied from himself, and contented with what is his own; is not envious, nor worldly-minded; harbours no wish, to encroach upon the rights of other men, to diminish their reputation, or to do any kind of wrong or mischief to any one. Since then he hurts nobody, either by word, or deed; uses no deceit with his tongue, nor ever slanders his neighbor; he, by such a blameless conduct, prevents the very beginnings, cuts off the very sources, of that manifold enmity between men, which springs daily and hourly, from frauds, falsehood, calumny; from all the variety of knavish, injurious treatment, they exercise upon each other.

4thly, therefore. This man of peace, is a man of sound wisdom, of true practical understanding. He has the substance of knowledge, without assuming the appearance of it. He rightly considers, that the vast majority of the things for which men usefully contend, are not worth contending for;

for; are not worth half the disturbance and vexation of mind, they give themselves about them. He plainly sees (what it would be happy for us, if we all would see) that the contention itself often proves a far greater evil, than the object or the subject of it is a good. He wisely judges, that the loss of our peace, is generally speaking a far more fatal loss, than the being disappointed of all the things, about which we quarrel; could possibly amount to,---Thus he shuns the error, so common with people who are governed by their passions, or wild fancy; that of 'sacrificing great and certain blessings, to little and imaginary ones.'

gthly. The christian, who "follows peace with all men," is the christian (I was going to say, he is the only christian) whom we ought to look upon as a sincere believer of the gospel, and of those scriptures which we all profess to acknowledge as the word of God.

This worthy man shews his faith by his obedience, the only way by which any man can shew it. He knows that a peaceable behavior, besides being attended with the

happiest consequences in common life, and earnestly enforced by all human governments, is moreover most especially enjoined by his heavenly master, as indispensably requisite in the life of a christian. He well remembers the character given of christianity by the apostle St. James, in these affectionate words: "The wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy, and good fruits." He remembers also, that our Lord himself is eminently styled in scripture "The Prince of Peace," and his religion "the gospel of peace." And no marvel they are so styled! For surely, to be the blessed instrument of reconciling mankind, to God, and to each other, which was the gracious purpose for which the Son of God came into the world, is the noblest idea we can form, of any heavenly teacher, or of any heavenly doctrine!

With this idea were the imaginations of the ancient prophets warmed, when they painted in such strong, such lively colors, the superlative dignity of the Messiah's person, and the peaceful blessings of his reign. "His name," says Isaiah, "shall be called wonderful,

"wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God;  
"the everlasting Father," and, to crown all  
his other titles, "the Prince of Peace."  
Under his mild, auspicious influence, "the  
"wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the  
"leopard shall lie down with the kid.  
"They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my  
"holy mountain. For the earth shall be  
"filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as  
"the waters cover the seas."

6thly. As the benevolent man about  
whom I am speaking, never breeds or be-  
gins any contention himself; so he does all  
that lies in his power, to suppress it, whenever  
it is bred or begun by other men. He not  
only never breaks the peace, but he does all  
that he can, to keep it from being broken, as  
well as to heal it after it is broken. He is  
desirous therefore, and ready upon all occa-  
sions, to make up differences, to rectify mis-  
understandings, to restore harmony and good-  
will, between any persons, and in any cases  
that fall within the compass of his know-  
ledge. And in this office he engages, from  
pure charity of heart, from pure kindness  
of intention; not from the vanity of shew-  
ing his own importance, or the idle curiosi-



ty of prying into the secret connections and concerns of any persons whatsoever. Which inquisitive curiosity is so far from producing any good, that it hardly ever fails to produce a great deal of mischief.

7thly. The man who answers the foregoing description, if he is in the condition of a subject, or in any inferior station, will evermore be found obedient, orderly, and submissive to his governors; quietly attending his own proper business, with all due reverence to those that are his superiors, and sit above him. As a man, he thinks he cannot do more wisely, than to follow the advice of the wisest of men; "My son, "Fear thou the Lord, and the king; and "meddle not with them, that are given to "change." As a christian, he takes the more sacred rule of the gospel for his guide; "renders to all their dues; tribute, to whom "tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; "fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom "honor. He owes no man any thing, but "brotherly love."

On the other hand, if the peace-maker is himself in authority, or a man of distinguished rank and fortune; he behaves with  
condescen-

condescension to those that are below him; looks upon them, and treats them, as his fellow-creatures; considers himself as the "minister of God, for their good;" and exerts his power over them with impartial equity, with a tender regard to the interests of each individual as well as of the community at large. Hence (so far as in him lies) he preserves the public tranquillity, prevents all public grievances, all just occasions of popular disquietudes and disturbances. In fine. He heartily endeavors to verify, in his own person, by his own personal administration, those delightful words of the Psalmist, wherein he has so strikingly pictured the happiness of a nation, that lives under the protection of a governor, whose dominion is tempered with justice and mercy. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In his days, shall the righteous flourish; yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth."

8thly. From all that has been said, concerning this maker of peace; it manifestly follows, that he is not merely a good man

man in himself, or in his intentions; but is actually, throughout every employment, throughout every relation of life, a most excellent member of society.

Were all men, or were but the generality of men, like him, in temper, and in behavior; how smoothly would the affairs of the world go on! How much good would be procured, how much misery avoided! I say, how much misery avoided. For is it not apparent to every unprejudiced mind, that the original want, or the decay, of this truly social virtue, and the proportional increase of the opposite vices, is the foundation of almost all national calamities? The great majority of which calamities, in our own country, especially in our own present age, are not natural evils, but evils unnaturally created by men of unruly, unchristian spirits; abounding with faults, themselves; yet for ever railing against, blindly and impudently condemning, the far less criminal failings of their governors. But their end shall be, according to their deeds! Namely, that  
' Having at least as many sins of their own  
' to answer for, as other men; and, beside  
' these, the heavy additional guilt of shewing  
ing

ing no mercy to the characters or conduct  
 of their superiors; they themselves there-  
 fore shall have judgment and punishment,  
 without mercy.

I beg you not to imagine, that this is  
 my sentence. No! It has been pronounced  
 upon them long ago, by the supreme de-  
 cider of all causes; and will infallibly be  
 executed, if they do not sincerely repent.---

“With what judgment ye judge, ye shall  
 be judged; and with what measure ye  
 mete to others, it shall be measured to  
 you again;”---is the solemn declaration  
 of that God, “Who cannot lie, whose  
 word cannot pass away.” And happy  
 would it be for these, as well as for all  
 other turbulent, censorious, men; if they  
 would lay this declaration to heart; if they  
 would honestly set about correcting their  
 manners, and their actions, by it.--But,  
 leaving these malecontents for the present,  
 let us proceed,

githly, To what I had almost forgotten  
 to mention, though what should by no  
 means be omitted;---namely, that He  
 who wishes to live peaceably with all  
 men, and really intends to practise it,  
 must



“must be a man of sobriety; chaste in his desires, virtuous in his private life.”---

For, whatever some persons, of shallow intellects, or of loose morals, may pretend; there is an inseparable connection between a man's private virtues, and his virtues as a member of the community.

He that leads the life of a libertine, can be no real friend to peace, or to them who make peace. Our Savior's rule, that “No man can serve two masters,” holds universally; throughout civil, as well as religious, concerns. Indeed it is evident to common sense, that in proportion as any man gives himself up to luxury and sensuality, in such proportion he must inevitably neglect the duties of his station; or in other words, he must do injustice to the public.---It is also equally evident, that, as no man's vices can possibly be confined to himself, or to his own mere person; so no man can possibly indulge himself, either in lewd, or in expensive pleasures, without direct, particular injury, to individuals;---without injury to their reputation, their innocence, their property, and consequently their peace,

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If you look abroad into this world of ours, you will not long be at a loss for examples, to confirm the truth of my assertion. You will soon behold, what scenes of confusion, unbridled lust and extravagance introduce amongst us; how fatal they prove (as they cannot but prove) to the quiet of the injured sufferers!

10thly. Whoever of you will take the trouble to recollect, and to compare, the several parts of the foregoing description of the peaceable man; will find they jointly lead to this interesting conclusion---that 'He is, of all others, the happiest man alive.'---For his mind is enslaved to no fottish habits, ruffled by no violent passions, racked with no evil conscience, no terrors of guilt.---As for his neighbors, and the world about him; he has the least of any man breathing, to fear from them.---Having neither done nor designed them evil, he can have no danger to apprehend, either from their private resentment, or from the public laws of his country.

With respect to his own proper thoughts, and his own affections; they are of the humane, placid, chearful, sort; productive  
of

of peace and felicity within him; within his own heart, within his own breast; where all true felicity must fix its seat, or its "Place will no-where be found."

Thus it appears, that this valuable man is blessed, in and from himself; from his own disposition, from his own actions; as well as by the express declaration and promise of his Savior. He is as certainly, though far less happy, in the society of men now upon earth, as he will afterwards be in the communion of Saints and Angels in Heaven!

11thly, and lastly. If the persons, whose example is recommended to us in the text, have so many endearing qualities; you cannot wonder that Christ, the all-perfect judge of human merit, should bestow such high praises, and pronounce so signal a benediction, upon them. "Blessed are the Peace-makers: for they shall be called," they shall be esteemed, "the children of God;" and consequently shall be honored and rewarded, as such.

But to shew you more fully, what this blessing is; what are its several acceptations;

tions; and what moral lessons it should, in all reason, imprint upon our minds;--- must be left for the subject of another discourse.

In the mean time, even the inaccurate draught I have already given you of this charming character, is sufficient to make any man in love with it; to make him ambitious to attain it; and become worthy of it:---A character, that will be his immortal glory, when all the transitory honors of the present life, all the objects of our present strife and emulation, shall be no more.----For goodness and greatness, which are so often falsely distinguished, and unnaturally divided, in this world, will meet in heaven, never to part again.---- There all neglected modest worth, will be brought to light; will receive its just applause: and those humble, peaceable christians, will be "greatest in the kingdom of heaven," who pass unnoticed here, because they "seek not the praise of men, but the praise of God."

That ' we may all faithfully copy their  
' virtues, and be blest with the same joy-  
' ful sentence from the mouth of our com-  
' mon



'man judge;' ought to be the daily prayer  
of every creature, who believes the gospel,  
or wishes well to mankind!

### To the King Eternal.

### SERMON IX.

## S E R M O N IX.

M A T T H E W, V. 9.

*Blessed are the Peace-makers: for they shall be called the Children of God.*

**W**HEN I purposed discoursing upon this Text, the obvious method of treating it, was,

I. To describe the persons, whose example is here set before us; to inform you who are "Makers of peace," in the Scriptural and proper sense of those words.

II. To consider the blessing, which our Savior pronounces upon them;---namely, that "They shall be called the Children of God."

III. To apply the whole to ourselves; as a people professing to believe the doctrines, and to obey the precepts, of the gospel.

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In pursuance of this design, I have already shewn you, that a real disposition to make and cultivate peace, is a compound (if I may so speak) of several virtues; that no one virtuous quality, singly, or by itself, can render any man worthy of this excellent character.

Hence it appeared, that a right knowledge of himself, and its inseparable attendant charity in his sentiments of others:---veracity in his words, and integrity in his dealings; sobriety, and a due command of his passions; a general benevolence to all mankind, with a firm belief of the Sacred Scriptures; it appeared, I say, that all these ingredients are requisite to form the man, whom our Savior styles a "Maker of peace;" and that, if any one of them be wanting;---if he is debauched, dishonest, deceitful with his tongue, conceited of his own abilities, contemptuous in his treatment of other men; under any such deficiency, he will necessarily give offence, will do actual injury, to the people about him; and consequently will be guilty of breaking the peace.

And thus I have shown, that a man who is not a

I further observed to you, that persons of these gentle manners, are, above all men, easy and happy in themselves, as well as agreeable and amiable to their neighbors; that it is therefore no wonder our Lord should pronounce upon them the blessing, whose particular meaning I come now to examine: namely, that "They shall be called the Children of God."

II. To be the Children, or the Sons, "of God," is a phrase very common in Scripture; and signifies, not merely to be his creatures (which all beings throughout the universe are) but moreover to be like him, to resemble him, as children resemble their natural parents, in our tempers, and moral conduct; to imitate the goodness and mercy of this heavenly father, as children copy the manners and actions of their earthly parents;---uniformly to obey his voice, and to direct our lives by his righteous laws, as far as the frailty of our nature, the temptations and bad examples of the world around us, will permit,---"Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you," says our divine teacher, in this very chapter;



"That ye may be the children of your  
 "father who is in heaven. For he is kind  
 "to the unthankful, and to the evil."

By the same figure, "To be the children  
 "of Abraham," is to resemble Abraham, in  
 faith, and in good works. "If ye were  
 "Abraham's children," says our Lord to the  
 Jews, who were perpetually boasting of  
 their descent from that eminent patriarch;  
 "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would  
 "do the works of Abraham." So like-  
 wise, "to be the children of Satan," is to  
 follow the example of that impious spirit,  
 in opposition to God, to his holy spirit, and  
 his holy word.

Again. Whenever you look into the  
 New Testament, you cannot but observe,  
 that as sincere christians in general, so Christ  
 himself in particular, and in a still far sub-  
 limier sense, is called the Son of God;  
 from the supernatural manner of his birth;  
 from the unparalleled resemblance, which he  
 bears to the deity, in all divine perfections;  
 from his being second in majesty to the al-  
 mighty father, "the brightness of his glo-  
 "ry, the express image of his person, and  
 "upholding

"upholding all things by the word of his power."

Upon the whole, then; you see, I presume, that "to be called the children of God," is the highest title of honor, that can possibly be conferred on any created beings; as to be really like him, in their highest praise and felicity.

And let this, by the way, convince you, 'what an opinion your Savior entertained, 'concerning men of a meek and quiet spirit'; since he has graced them with the noblest mark of distinction the whole compass of nature affords! "Blessed are the Peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

I will only add, that no man can be surprised at hearing the friends of peace declared to be the "children of God," who remembers how repeatedly, and with what warmth of affection, God himself is styled, "the God of Peace," throughout the writings of the New Testament. --- "Finally, "brethren," says St. Paul, taking leave of the Corinthians with the last and best advice he had to give them, "Farewell! Be "of one mind! Live in peace! And the

God of love and peace shall be with  
 "you."

III. The text, as well as the blessing  
 annexed to it, being thus explained, the  
 application of it shall contain a few prac-  
 tical reflections; which I hope will appear,  
 both proper to the subject, and useful to our-  
 selves.

First, let us remark, in the instance  
 before us, 'how very falsely men often judge  
 of each other's merit.'--Let us learn to  
 hold in just contempt that vulgar error;  
 which looks upon a peaceable disposition,  
 as 'a mere insipid character;--a mere  
 negative virtue, or no virtue at all; a  
 mere tamely enduring injuries and insults;  
 a fitting still, in short, like a coward, under  
 the ill-nature, and ill usage, of others.'

I much fear, that the people, who think  
 and speak thus disrespectfully concerning  
 this duty, either know little of the religion  
 they profess, or care less about it. For the  
 text, as I hinted just now, demonstrates be-  
 yond dispute, that the blessed Jesus, the su-  
 preme all-knowing judge, thought very  
 differently concerning this character; which  
 is, in itself, a most respectable character;  
 built

built upon the several virtues, that are the only lasting foundation of happiness, either to society, or to individuals.

To be a peace-maker, is not to sit still, and do nothing; but to be ever ready and zealous to do good, by first avoiding the occasions of evil;—by avoiding those bad inclinations, and bad practices, that are the fatal source of all our woes. Since it is impossible to be virtuous, but by first taking care not to be vicious; or to do good, but by first taking care not to do mischief. Now no people upon earth do half so much mischief as they, who, without the clearest, without the most urgent reasons, begin to break the peace; in neighborhoods; in cities; in kingdoms. “The beginning of strife,” says the wisest of the sons of men, “is as when one letteth out water.” It is like forcing a breach, through a sea-bank; that will lay a whole country open, to the fury of the tide; and may make more havock in a few hours, than the united efforts of the ablest men can repair, in many days, or even years.

But, 2dly. Against the character of the peace-maker, as described above, a contrary



objection, I foresee, will be started: namely, that 'If it be the offspring of so many good qualities, which must all conspire to give it birth; it is nothing at last, but an imaginary character; hardly possible in idea, and utterly impossible in practice. For no human creature ever possessed such an assemblage of virtues; nor consequently ever deserved the appellation of a peace-maker. Not to mention the jarring interests, the endless variety of humors, and contrariety of opinions; which render the harmony among men prescribed by christianity, still more visionary, still more unlikely to exist.' *but the clearest without the most*

The authors of this objection, compared with those of the preceding one, are I confess an abundant proof, 'how difficult it is for some people to be unanimous.' Since the former despise the character before us, as low and unmanly; while the latter see it in a totally opposite light, 'as far too sublime for human nature to attain.' Yet neither, surely, can want to be told, that there are degrees of perfection in morals, as in all other things; that the gospel requires no impossibilities, or that christians should be as spotless

less as angels, and their whole lives completely virtuous; but considers us as men, with the infirmities that belong to us, with all the circumstances that surround us, as men.

In the very case, therefore, we are debating, When St. Paul commands the christian at Rome, "To live peaceably with all men," does he not prefix these two most equitable conditions, "If it be possible," and "as much as lieth in you." "As far as the situation you are placed in, the passions and failings of the men you converse or are connected with, will allow."

And here I appeal to your own impartial judgment, to your own consciences, whether we may not certainly obey this divine command, at least a great deal better, at least a great deal oftener, than we do! And though we cannot, in this, or in any point of duty, arrive at perfection; is that even a shadow of a reason, why we should not come as near to it as we can?

If we cannot always make peace, we may always refrain from breaking it. If we cannot controul the actions of other men, we have an undoubted power over our own.

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opinio If

If we cannot avoid all occasions of quarrell and offence, we may avoid a great many; which, instead of avoiding, we wilfully run into.

To be short, It is a truth, as old as the fall of Adam, that in all matters of duty, "men want will, vastly more than ability." And if these same people, who cavil at the duty before us, would only do their best; if they would but obey their Savior's precepts as well as they are able, or "as much as lieth in them;" they would be real "makers of peace," would have praise from God, and from all good men.   
 3dly, then. Since it is both profane to suppose, and entirely false in fact, that "God expects more from any man, than he has enabled the man to perform;" the infallible consequence is, that, "If blessed are the makers of peace, the quite contrary sentence will be pronounced against the breakers of it."

This inference is undeniable; and is too obvious, as well as too important, to be concealed. As the love and cultivation of peace, is a most christian virtue, or almost the sum of all virtues; so, deliberately to  
 11 violate

violate and destroy it, is, beyond compare, the most anti-christian of all vices--the very essence, and quintessence, of sin. The conclusion speaks for itself; that As the blessing and reward of the one, will be supremely great; for the penalty and punishment of the other, I will be dreadful in proportion.

Upon what principle, or with what sentiments, any man, professing the faith of Christ, can delight in endeavoring to stir up strife; those men particularly of our own age and nation, who take such incessant pains, by public speeches and seditious writings, to inflame our people against their governors, and to raise a civil war amongst us; by what motives, I say, these men are actuated, is best known to themselves. The stale pretence, you need not be told, is 'pure patriotism, pure zeal for the public good.' How far this is really the case, must be left to the determination of that awful day, which will disclose the secrets of all hearts, and the truth or falsehood of all pretences.

In the mean while, it unspeakably concerns them, in such a dangerous proceeding, to be fully assured that they are right in their opinions,



opinions, as well as honest in their intentions, if they have any reverence for the authority of scripture, or any regard to their own salvation ! But these are subjects, upon which men of this stamp, I doubt, bestow very few thoughts, and employ very little of their time. If they employed more, their behavior must be different; because the rule of conduct, laid down in the gospel of peace, is diametrically opposite to the violent measures which they pursue. Wise therefore and happy shall we be, if we shun their example.

Our Savior's words in the text, are more than sufficient to convince you of this. But please to read also, what St. Paul enjoins, in his first Epistle to Timothy. See how earnestly he commands you, not to slander and blaspheme your superiors (the characteristic of every profligate mortal) but to bless them, and to pray for them ! "I exhort," says the christian apostle, "That, first of all, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." And mark, I entreat you, the reason upon which he founds his charge, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable

“peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.  
 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight  
 “of God our Savior.”

4thly. Another inference from the text, so clear, that every eye may see it, is, “If the makers of peace are with propriety called children of God, the destroyers of it are with equal propriety to be called children of the wicked one.” If those deserve the sublimest titles of honor; these, as being directly contrary to them, deserve the deepest marks of disgrace. And as God is the author of all good, “the God of peace and love;” so Satan is the author of enmity and evil; of rebellion against the supreme king, and war in heaven; of confusion and misery, in those sacred realms of bliss.

Hence, as all virtuous men, in scripture, have the glorious appellation of “Sons of God,” all sinful men are branded as “Sons of Belial;” more especially, the adversaries of peace; because they, of all others, resemble him most, in that malevolent pride of heart, which is his distinguishing attribute, and was his first ruin! “Ye are of your father, the devil,” says our Savior

to the imperious, contentious, pharisees :  
 " he was a murderer from the beginning."  
 St. John derives wickedness, and wicked  
 men; without any distinction, from this re-  
 bellious ancestor. " He that committeth  
 " sin, is of the devil : for the devil sinneth  
 " from the beginning." St. James men-  
 tions a set of bigots in the primitive church;  
 fond of their own notions, full of their own  
 wisdom; who were everlastingly quarrelling,  
 about circumcision, and Jewish ceremonies;  
 with which christianity has not the smallest  
 concern. Therefore says the apostle to these  
 turbulent spirits, " If ye have bitter envy  
 " and strife in your hearts, glory not, and  
 " lie not against the truth." For if this  
 be the wisdom, of which ye boast; " This  
 " wisdom descendeth not from above, but  
 " is earthly, sensual, devilish. Whereas the  
 " wisdom that is from above" (the heavenly  
 " spirit of the gospel) " is first pure, then  
 " peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreat-  
 " ed; full of mercy, and good fruits; with-  
 " partiality, without hypocrisy." *and oldmole*  
 " 5thly, and lastly. It is extremely worth  
 your notice, that " all sorts of fiery zealots,  
 " and self-conceited reformers, begin their  
 " work

work at the wrong end; and perversely take the most difficult, indirect road, though the direct and plain one lies open before them. For, beyond controversy, the true, the only way, to rectify all abuses, to serve our country, to unite us in lasting peace and love, is; for each man of us, not to be severe upon others, but to be watchful over himself; to attend diligently, not to his neighbor's conduct, but to his own; in one word, to consider the affairs, and the duties, of his own station, of his own person; and to discharge them faithfully in the fear of God.

I appeal again to every creature, who has any discernment of things, whether this be not the most effectual, whether it be not the easiest, the shortest method, both to redress, and to prevent, grievances, of every kind. To reform others, the business we are all so forward to undertake, is seldom in our power: but to amend ourselves, so far at least as to become much better than we are, is always possible, and is our indispensable duty. This is the task, which his own conscience, as well as the word of God, points out to every man:—the task, upon



upon which not only his eternal, but his present, welfare depends. And were we all employed in it, as we ought to be, we should find work enough upon our hands. We should have neither leisure, nor inclination, to meddle with politics, and abuse our Governors. For it is an infinite aggravation of this sin, that 'the very people' who pay the least attention to their own behavior, are the most virulent and bitter in their censures upon their brethren; that 'They who are so sharp-sighted in spying out the faults of their betters, are utterly blind to their own.' On the other side, it is a standing maxim in morals, that 'No good man ever took pleasure, either in speaking ill, or in thinking ill, of his neighbor;' and that 'Compassion to the failings of others, is the fairest ornament of a virtuous mind.' He who wants this, wants every thing. And when wretches, destitute of common humanity, presume to talk like patriots, or public reformers; as you may hear them doing, every day; they betray a degree of assurance, that no tongue can describe! They themselves, were they but honest enough to see and to confess it; they

they themselves are the men; whose whole temper of mind truly needs correction!--- And if any reformation was ever effected, by such a sorry set of instruments as these; it could only be through the interposition of that over-ruling providence, which, with an invisible hand of mercy, so often bringeth good out of evil.

In what a striking manner, beyond the power of formal argument, has our Savior exposed the impertinence, as well as the impudence, of those pretenders to virtue, who are anxious to purify all sinners, except themselves! Hear his own words, in the same discourse, from which the text is taken! "Why beholdest thou the mote"---the trifling speck of dirt---"that is in thy brother's eye;---but considerest not the beam"---the heavy load of infamy and guilt---"that is in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother; brother, let me pull the mote out of thine eye; when, lo, a beam is in thine own eye! Thou hypocrite! First cast the beam, out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly, to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye."

The conclusion, from this admonition of our Lord's, and from the whole of what has passed, is, that 'The reformation of others, must begin with the amendment of the reformer himself;---that 'An impartial sense of our own defects, and a candid interpretation of all human imperfections, are the only real patriotism; that 'If we make these the rule of our conduct, we shall have peace with one another in the life which now is, and peace with God in that which is to come."

To whom, only wise.

## SERMON X.

## S E R M O N X.

ROMANS xii, 9.

*Let Love be without Diffimulation. Abhor  
that which is Evil: Cleave to that which  
is Good.*

**A**NY person who reads St. Paul's Epistles with tolerable attention, will presently find that his usual method was this---To explain the particular subject, to settle the particular points, which were the immediate occasion of his writing the Epistle; and then to give his disciples such rules of moral duty, as were of universal obligation, of unlimited concern, to them, and to christians in all times or places.

The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, abound with excellent precepts of this general nature: a-



mong the choicest of which, the words I have taken for the text, may justly be esteemed. They breathe the genuine spirit of christianity, and highly deserve your most careful regard. "Let Love be without  
"Diffimulation. Abhor that which is  
"Evil: cleave to that which is Good."

In order therefore to render these words as fully understood, and as useful, as I am able; I shall make it my business to illustrate them, to enlarge upon them, in the several different senses of which they seem capable. And since there are three distinct precepts contained in them, I shall take these precepts according to the course, wherein they lie before us.

I, then. "Let love be without diffimulation:" Have a sincere, unfeigned, regard, for each other: Love one another, not in word only, but in deed, and in truth. Not only speak tenderly, not only think and judge favorably, of your fellow-christians; but really do them all the good, that is in your power. Let the affection you express towards them, come from your heart: let it verify itself, in acts of kindness, humanity, and compassion.

2. "Let love be without dissimulation," in another light: Let it proceed from right, from truly religious, motives: serve your neighbor, not from private, or interested, views; which would be down-right selfishness; but from the generous principles of christianity. Do them good, not in hopes of any return or recompense from them; but because they are your fellow-creatures, and fellow-christians; because God has commanded it, and will reward you for it. In fine. Be not a mere man of the world (that worthless, that oftentimes wicked, character) but a man of honor, and of conscience. Throughout all your actions, all your intercourse with each other, be not influenced by merely secular motives, but by higher and nobler considerations; by a prospect of the divine favor, and the eternal blessings of heaven. This will render your conduct uniform, in all its essential parts. This is a foundation, that will support your virtue, at all times, and under all circumstances.

3. "Let love be without dissimulation," in a further point of view: let your affection be not only real, but impartial: I mean, let it not be confined, to your personal connections;

tions; to a few kindred, and family-relations; to a little circle, of particular favorites; or to any distinctions of sect, and party: but extend your charity to all mankind. Consider christians, as your brethren in Christ; and all other men, as your brethren by nature, as sons of the same great universal Father.

4. "Let love be without dissimulation," in the last, and finishing sense. To render your charity completely religious, let it not stop, even at your enemies: "Bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you." Remember, that you yourself are not without failings. Therefore let no injuries you may have received, make you relentless, or revengeful. However others behave to you, do you behave like a christian to them. If you condemn their conduct, take care to resemble it as little as possible. On the contrary, imitate, to your utmost power, the glorious example of almighty God; who is kind to the unthankful; who patiently bears the daring, repeated provocations, of sinful men; not willing that any should perish, but that all should repent and live. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your  
" Father

“ Father who is in heaven, is merciful. Be  
“ not overcome by evil, but overcome evil  
“ with good.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you the whole force and scope of this truly Gospel precept---A precept, upon which such infinite stress is laid, both by our Lord himself, and by his Apostles after him. It is indeed, next to the love of God, the fundamental law of his religion: And he has made the practice of it the test, the distinguishing character, of a Christian. “ By this,” says he, “ Shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And again: “ This is my commandment; that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

To any person, who at all considers these divine words, I think it must be self-evident, that they can have no possible tendency, but to sweeten men's tempers; to promote peace, harmony, and happiness, amongst them.

Is it not wonderful therefore, that there should be so much difficulty in persuading creatures, called rational, to observe a precept, which would be productive of the greatest



greatest blessings to them, in this world, as well as in the next? Is it not wonderful, that men should discover such a perverse inclination to what is mischievous and sinful; when God has so graciously set virtue and happiness before them? Yet thus it is! Though all people fancy they love themselves, 'There are but few of us who really know their own good, and fewer still, who pursue it!---This is the observation of a Heathen Author, who very probably knew nothing of Christianity, and had no immediate thought of a future state.---But let us proceed,

II, To the second Precept, delivered in the Text; "Abhor that which is evil"---Detest every thing that is offensive and hurtful to others, every thing that is disgraceful and dishonourable to yourself. Disdain whatever is unjust, knavish, or oppressive: Whatever is injurious to the reputation, person, or property, of your neighbour. Be superior to all sordid, low, arts. Scorn every act of fraud, falsehood, or deceit;---every thing, in short, that contradicts the eternal rule of equity; "The doing to others, as ye would be done by."

Abhor

Abhor theft, and all such things; because they are unworthy of you, as a man; much more, as a Christian: because they are what your own conscience condemns: because they are forbidden by the laws of the Gospel, by the commands of your blessed Savior: above all, because they are repugnant to the will of God, who sent that Savior into the world, to reform the manners of men, to encourage amongst them every thing that is praise-worthy, and to deter them from the contrary.

2. "Abhor that which is evil," for another reason; namely, Because it is forbidden by the laws of your country; because it is an insult upon the rights of men, as well as upon the authority of God. All moral evil, according to the degree wherein it prevails, is destructive of public order:— and every wicked man, as far as in him lies, subverts the very principles, on which society is founded. So that, if all other men were wicked like himself; universal confusion and misery must ensue. Whence he ought, most evidently, to be treated as an adversary; to his neighbour, to his country, to his species.

3, therefore. "Abhor that which is  
"evil," upon your own immediate ac-  
count; because it will hurt your present  
interest, and involve you in a variety of  
present troubles.---It will break the peace  
of your mind. It will get you enemies in  
abundance, but never procure you one hearty  
friend. It will ruin your character, expose  
you to shame and public reproach. It will  
not only debar you from the esteem of all  
respectable people, but will make you in-  
famous in the sight of every creature who  
knows you. For it is impossible that  
wicked men can have any love, any good  
opinion, of each other:---and the greater  
villain a man is suspected to be, the more  
despicable is he, even in the eyes of  
those who are his companions in ini-  
quity. What a wretched condition must  
this appear! To have a guilty conscience  
within, and not a single advocate without;  
but to be either dreaded, or hated, or de-  
spised, by all around him! Yet such is the  
misery, you may every day see men creating  
to themselves by their sinful passions, even  
in the present life. Which, I am sure, is  
argu-

argument enough to restrain you from vice, if no other could be found !

But, 4thly, and most especially. “ Abhor that which is evil,” because it will bring upon you the future displeasure of God ; because it will exclude you from the kingdom of heaven, will undo you for ever in the world to come. This is the capital point, the grand consideration, of all ! This is the argument, that most intimately affects every man’s person. Were it possible that our vices, and all their consequences, could end with our lives ; a wicked man would then have nothing to fear, but the penalties inflicted by human laws ; which, through force, or through artifice, he might sometimes escape. But the case is far otherwise ! Those consequences will reach infinitely beyond the grave ; and will be felt in their utmost severity, when this world, when the very remembrance of it, shall be no more ! For our present life, with all its pains and all its pleasures, will quickly pass away :--- Whereas neither the happiness, nor the misery, of the next, has any fixed period. Therefore, “ Abhor what is evil,” not for  
its



its present only, but particularly for its future, bad effects; which will be unspeakably more dreadful, as well as more lasting; and which it is utterly out of your power to prevent, except by a speedy repentance, by reforming your manners without delay.

thly, then; and to finish this head. If superior reasons cannot prevail with you, to shun that which is evil; shun it, for your own sake; because it will certainly, in the end, be most injurious to yourself.---

Have some regard to your interest [at least, if you have none to your duty. If you are unconcerned about your neighbour's welfare, pay some attention to your own.---

In a word; if you have any real love of yourself, flee from sin, as from your deadliest enemy; and depend upon this, as an infallible truth: that, 'Provided you continue impenitently wicked; provided you persist in acts of injustice, and oppression; it is you, who, at last, will be the great sufferer.' All the pleasures, and profits, of your iniquity, will be of very short duration: and all the mischief you can do to others, is nothing, compared with the misery

fery you will bring upon yourself.----Only consider this; and you will want few persuasives, to enforce your duty; you will want no motive, but self preservation, to "Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good."

These last words contain the third Precept, delivered in the Text: Which I shall now proceed to expatiate and comment upon, after the same manner, as I have done upon the two former.

III. "Cleave to that which is good"--- Embrace all opportunities of doing friendly offices to your neighbor: take delight in exercising the great duty of undissembled love and charity, enjoined by the first Precept.

2. "Cleave to that which is good," in the general acceptation of the word good: Be zealous in the cause of religion and virtue, at large: Be hearty in the practice of all christian duties; not of those only, which respect your neighbor; but of those which relate to God, and yourself.----

"Cleave to that which is good:" stick to it, if I may so say, and abide by it. Persevere

severe with resolution in whatever your own reason and the gospel recommend: Strive, with all your might, to be constant in the observance of it, Let nothing divert you from it: Let nothing draw you aside, or entice you to forsake it. Be not allured by what is falsely called pleasure, that will be sure to end in pain. Be not tempted by corrupt notions of interest, to forfeit your character, and your conscience; which are a treasure, that surpasses all the wealth of the Indies. Let no authority sway you, let no specious examples embolden you, to do what you know is wrong; what you see is destructive to the people that practise it. Let no terrors affright you from proceeding in what you are convinced is right. If your cause is but just, God will be on your side, and you have nothing to fear. "Who is "he that will" (who is he that can) "harm "you, if ye be followers of that which is "good?" Consider all these encounters, as the proper trial of your virtue. Remember that, with a christian, interest and duty are precisely the same thing. They go hand in hand: it is impossible to separate them, or to pursue them asunder. If we  
did

did but duly attend to this indisputable maxim, it would prevent all the wickedness, and almost all the wretchedness, that abounds in the christian world.

3. The apostle's precept may be taken in another excellent meaning. "Cleave to that which is good."---Esteem the reputation of a good man, as your highest honor. Reckon it your supreme happiness, to obey the will of God, to live under the direction of his righteous laws, to have the delightful prospect of a final blessing from him. Fix this principle firmly in your mind, adhere to it uniformly, and determine always to act upon it. It is the noblest principle, you can possibly be governed by. It will supply you with courage, in all dangers; support you, under all difficulties; and carry you safe through all temptations, whether of riches or of poverty, whether of prosperity or of adversity. It will dispose you to do your duty, not as a matter of compulsion, not as a task imposed upon you; but freely, and with a cheerful heart.



4. The conclusion of the present head, and the substance of what has been said upon the whole text, is briefly this. Attach yourself inseparably to that which is good; not in its vulgar or worldly acceptance, but in its moral and religious one. Know the state of your own mind, and have a just sense of your own defects. Be kind, and compassionate, to all men: judge favorably, speak tenderly, of them; act with integrity, and humanity, towards them.

Be devout and reverent, towards God: endeavor to perform all that he commands, to serve him faithfully with all your power. Be chaste, and sober, in your private life: keep yourself pure from those vices of sensuality and extravagance, by which you see men ruining their health, their fortunes, their families; not to mention their salvation. In your whole journey through this world, never take your passions (which will be certain to mislead you) but take reason, and scripture, for your guides: consult them on all occasions: carefully shun what they forbid, and industriously follow what they

they prescribe. Look upon such an attention to your conduct, not only as your wisest employment here; but as the sole foundation of all the blessings you can hope to obtain hereafter.

Therefore "Love one another without dissimulation. Abhor whatever is evil: "Cleave to whatever is right, and good."

Give me leave to remark, before I dismiss you, that in these three precepts, as I have explained them, there is something affectionate, something generous, to the highest degree. And I am sure you must be convinced, that the behavior which they enjoin, is of universal importance. Do not then, treat such excellent advice, with thoughtless unconcern. Do not confide what is delivered from this place, as mere political matter of form, or as the mere amusement of the present half-hour; but let it make a due impression upon your minds, and produce its due effect upon your lives. May the precepts of the gospel have the happy influence, to render both you, and all who are called christians, sincerely virtuous! May they purify our hearts; and implant

in us the love of whatever is amiable, or valuable. May they extirpate every selfish, unfocial principle; banish all envy, enmity, and malice; and dispose us to oblige, to assist, to forgive, one another. May the promotion of these great ends, be the joint view, of those who preach, and of those who hear, the word of God. May the former be zealous to enforce his will, and the latter to obey it. May the love of our maker, and of our neighbor, be the prevailing motive to action, throughout the christian world. May those who profess to believe the gospel, have worthy ideas of it. May every disciple of Christ, place his religion, where it ought to be placed; in honestly fulfilling the duties of his person, and his station. To sum up the whole, May we all cordially unite, in advancing the glory of God, and the salvation of each other. This is the work, that should be the grand subject of our thoughts, the grand object of our endeavors. It is the very business, for the accomplishment of which the Son of God came down from heaven. And blessed are the men, who shall be found at last,

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last, to have contributed their part (as every soul among you, without exception, may do) towards carrying into execution his gracious design!

**To whom, only wife.**

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But no man knows the mind of God. The  
law of God is not a law of man, and the  
will of God is not the will of man. The  
will of God is the will of the Father, and  
the will of the Father is the will of the  
Son. The will of the Son is the will of the  
Father, and the will of the Father is the will  
of the Son. The will of the Father and the  
will of the Son are one and the same.

I say design in the design of this Text, is  
 1. To explain the Text itself. 2.  
 To make such remarks upon it, as the  
 highest require; Such as may rectify our  
 judgment in Religion, as well as our  
 Text is design.

N. SERMON VI

N 2      SERMON XI.

By this, we shall presently perceive the  
false and correctness of the Text, by only  
looking back to the beginning of the Chap-  
ter; where the Reader shall observe the  
false





## S E R M O N XI.

EPHESIANS V. 6, 7.

*Let no man deceive you with vain words.---**For because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.***M**Y design in the choice of this Text, is.

I. To explain the Text itself. II. To make such remarks upon it, as the subject requires; Such as may rectify our judgment in Religion, as well as our conduct in daily life.

I, then. We shall presently perceive the sense and connection of the Text, by only looking back to the beginning of the Chapter; where the Apostle thus exhorts the

Ephesians. " Be ye followers of God, as  
 " dear Children; and walk in love, as  
 " Christ also loved us, and hath given  
 " himself for us. But fornication, and all  
 " uncleanness; or covetousness; let it not  
 " be once named amongst you, as becometh  
 " Saints. For this ye know;---that no  
 " whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor  
 " covetous man who is an idolater, hath  
 " any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ,  
 " and of God." Then follows the Text.  
 " Let no man deceive you with vain words,  
 " For because of these things, cometh the  
 " wrath of God, upon the Children of  
 " Disobedience."

The plain meaning is; ' Whoever insi-  
 ' nuates that lewdness, intemperance, or an  
 ' inordinate love of money, are innocent,  
 ' indifferent matters; hearken not to such  
 ' a teacher. Pay him no attention. Treat  
 ' him as a deceiver, and an impostor. For  
 ' these, be assured, are the very sins, that  
 ' call down the displeasure of God, upon  
 ' all who commit them. They are the  
 ' very sins, which religion is intended to  
 ' suppress. They are utterly inconsistent  
 ' with the Christian character. And no man,  
 who

“who is habitually guilty of them, can have any part in the kingdom of heaven.”

By “The Children of Disobediencce,”--- charged in the Text with the foregoing crimes, we are to understand, either the Heathens in particular,---amongst whom these vices remarkably prevailed; or any wicked men, who pretend to believe in Christ, and yet take no care to obey his precepts.

The unconverted Gentiles, both from the epidemical depravity of their manners, and because they wilfully rejected the Gospel when it was offered to them, are emphatically termed in Scripture “Children of Disobediencce.” And all profligate men, who profess themselves Christians, but live like Heathens; Such men, I say, are “Sons of Disobediencce,” in a still worse, in a more shameful sense. They doubly offend: against the original light of their own reason; and against the additional, superior light, of divine Revelation. They transgress, not only the laws of nature and of man, but the express and immediate will of God;--- consequently are sinners, or disobedient children, in the most criminal degree.



"Be not ye, therefore," says the Apostle,  
 "Partakers with them." Beware of their  
 'example, that ye may escape their punish-  
 'ment. Keep yourselves pure from the  
 'vices, by which they incur the wrath of  
 'Heaven. Be chaste, in your private lives;  
 'upright, in your dealings; friendly and  
 'charitable, throughout your whole inter-  
 'course with each other. In a word:--  
 'Fear God, and observe his righteous com-  
 'mands: Which will make you Christians  
 'indeed, and is the certain means to gain  
 'you admittance into his everlasting king-  
 'dom.'

This being the obvious, indisputable, in-  
 terpretation of the Text; Let us, II, Con-  
 sider, what matter it affords for our im-  
 provement, in Christian knowledge, and  
 practical piety.

I. Let us reflect a while, upon the ex-  
 cellency of our Savior's gospel; which en-  
 joins us virtues, so amiable, so important!  
 To be undefiled, in body and mind; to be  
 superior to the temptations of lust, and avarice;  
 to be generous, humane, and merciful,  
 towards all men; to think habitually  
 upon God, who created, and preserves us;  
 these

these are the qualities, that distinguish the disciple of the most holy Jesus. This is the conduct, that entitles him to his maker's favor; that is the foundation, both of his present happiness, and his future reward.

Whoever will examine the scriptures of the New Testament, will quickly find this, to be the substance of what they teach, and require from christian people. The author of the text, in his epistle to Titus, has summed it up, in a very few plain words: "the  
" grace of God, which bringeth salvation,  
" hath appeared unto all men; teaching us  
" that, denying ungodliness, and worldly  
" lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,  
" and godly, in this present world; look-  
" ing for the blessed hope of eternal life."

Now, if this be the case, let me only ask---What can be more desirable, or more valuable, than an institution of religion, which makes these virtues, its end, and its aim? Can there possibly be a shadow of a reason, for rejecting such a scheme of piety? Are there not the strongest reasons upon earth, for accepting it? Does it not manifestly deserve to be held in veneration by every creature, who has any goodness of heart,

heart, or any regard to the welfare of mankind? Especially, and above all, ought not the setting forth these christian virtues, both by precept and by example, to be the grand business of those men's lives; who have undertaken to "feed the flock of "God," who profess themselves ministers and preachers of his gospel?

adly, therefore. Admirable as this religion is; who can reflect, without wonder and concern, in how short a time it began to be corrupted! The apostles themselves had not left the world, before the very men, who should have taught it in its purity, and have applied its doctrines to their intended object, perverted those doctrines to their own wicked purposes.

That this was done among the Ephesians, you cannot help concluding, from the caution given them by St. Paul in the text: "Let no man deceive you, with vain words:" Which caution would have been absolutely needless, if no such deceivers had arisen amongst them. But the matter is placed beyond all doubt, by various passages throughout the New Testament; wherein you may hear both our Lord and his

his apostles, most earnestly warning their disciples of the danger that threatened them, from such impostors. The words of St. John in his first epistle, are an ample proof, without any other. "Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God. Because," (mark the following words) "Many false prophets are gone out into the world." Which exactly verifies our Savior's own prediction: "Take heed, that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying 'I am Christ; and shall deceive many.'"

I am sure, if you retain the least reverence for the gospel, or a sentiment of gratitude to its divine author; you must be shocked to behold this noble scheme, so graciously planned to lead us to salvation, almost immediately employed to seduce us from it. But so it is! There is nothing, to which sensuality and impiety will not embolden men. There is not a species of iniquity, which a false love of themselves, and a sordid love of money (that root of all evil) have not tempted them to contrive, and to put in execution. Which shews  
you



you the necessity of carefully guarding your hearts, against those vile affections.

gdy. Happy would it have been, for the christian church; if the abuses above-mentioned, had ended with those early times. But, alas! They increased and multiplied, through all the succeeding ages of the gospel. Christianity had not long been publicly established in our Western world, before it was defaced by the abominations of popery---That profane insult upon the grace of God, and gross imposition upon the understandings of men!

From this horrid superstition, the Reformation delivered the people of England, and the other protestant nations around us. Yet, though that was a providential, a blessed, event; we are, by no means, purged from all impurities. Even popery itself, begins again to get ground, and to spread its poison amongst us; threatening both our religious and our civil liberties. For popery is an enemy to every form, to every idea, of liberty. A member of that communion, if he be a papist upon principle, is an arrant slave; both in his person, and his conscience. Infallibility in the church; arbitrary

trary power in the state; implicit belief and submission in the people; persecution of all who dare to dissent, or to judge for themselves; are the basis of that antichristian system.

But, beside our danger from the Popish quarter, another imposture, not a bit less disgraceful to the Gospel, under the title of Methodism, has already made an alarming progress, and seems to be advancing still.

How nearly this latter is related to Popery, or what secret alliance there is between them, I take upon me to determine. But you must not be surprised to see them growing up together, and proceeding hand in hand. Since one corruption naturally makes way for another. And when errors, or abuses, in matters of religion, are once set on foot, no mortal can tell, where they will stop, or how they will end.--- Artful Jesuits, who "Lie in wait to deceive;" and, under the mask of piety, mean nothing but to serve themselves and their party, are delighted with every mode of superstitious credulity, which they can find in a Protestant country. They triumph

in all such credulity; and will turn it to their own advantage, regardless of every other consideration.

Not to trouble you with a detail of the manifold absurdities, that are chargeable upon the different corrupters of Christianity; there is one flagrantly bad character, by which they may all be known, and in which they all agree. Teachers of this stamp, never dwell long, or often, upon the moral parts of Scripture: They hardly ever enforce the practical duties of the Christian life. The religion for their purpose, does not consist in these;---but in doctrines of a more palatable sort, built upon Texts of Scripture, which they ignorantly or wilfully misunderstand. Faith without works; irresistible grace, that fills men full of this blessed faith, and compels them to become true Christians, whether they will or no; a confident reliance on the meritorious death of Christ, as alone sufficient to save us, though we do every thing possible, to condemn ourselves;----these are the subjects, that "Beguile unstable souls;" that answer the ends of corrupt

corrupt teachers, and suit the taste of corrupt hearers, to anticipate his viewing

I would not be thought to accuse these people, of preaching professedly against morality. It is abundant matter of accusation, that they do not preach professedly for it; that they neglect to urge it, as they ought to do; that they preach up the wretched stuff above-mentioned, more than it; and in the room of it. Whereas every faithful pastor, who is acquainted with Scripture and with his own sacred office, recommends moral virtue, far before all things: knowing it to be the "Whole of man:" knowing that, without it, no soul can see God, or ever be fit for the society of angels.

Suffer me then to repeat, what highly deserves to be remembered by you; that "Real Christianity, as it lies in the New Testament, distinct from all the spurious divinity whether of ancient or modern date, consists in a practical obedience to the morals of the Gospel, in a life of sobriety, in mutual acts of justice and benevolence, in the fear of God, and the love of our neighbor." This is the religion taught by Christ, and embraced by all sincere Christians;



Christians; but is utter destruction to deceivers and hypocrites, of every denomination: *Shall we be ashamed of you because*

Indeed the teachers of libertinism censured in the Text, can hardly be called hypocrites. They seem to have been avowed enemies of righteousness. They told the Ephesians, without scruple or ceremony, that 'Sensual and worldly desires convey no guilt, are no reproach to the Christian profession.' But says the good Apostle, "Let them not deceive you. For because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

5thly. Let what I have last said, give you a just veneration for the Scriptures of the New Testament; as well as for the inspired pen-men, that wrote them. Of whose integrity there can be no stronger proof, than their uniformly insisting upon moral duties, as the grand object of their doctrine. From this principle they never depart, never once teach any thing repugnant to it. Where virtue is wanting, they allow no substitute, to supply her place;—no Creeds, no Penances, no Absolutions; which

which are all forces of human invention.---

They flatter no man with hopes of obtaining salvation, by any such devices; but explicitly, with one common voice, declare the contrary. To be short. They all agree, in making works the completion of faith, and practise the perfection of knowledge. They all religiously follow the maxim, by which their heavenly master taught: "If ye know these things,---  
"happy are ye, if ye do them."

I do not mean to assert, that the New Testament contains nothing, but moral precepts; or that all parts of it are equally intelligible.---The fact is this.

Our Lord's discourses in the Gospels, were delivered to various persons, in different places, on different occasions. They frequently allude to the fashions of the country; or are levelled at particular opinions, then prevailing among the Jews. Therefore many things in them, from distance of time, and change of manners, must necessarily be less familiar to us, than to the men who first heard them. But one thing will admit no doubt---that 'The most pure, disinterested

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'virtue, is the scope, the tenor, the spirit, of  
'them all.'

Again, The Epistles, in like manner, were written to different churches, and upon different subjects; according to the state of things, in each particular church; and the peculiar situation of the people, at the time they were sent. It is impossible therefore, that these letters should, in all points, be as clear to us, after so many ages past; as they were to the persons, then living; who knew the immediate subject of each, with all its circumstances. But their general tendency is nevertheless, unquestionably, one and the same---To confirm the Disciples, in the true Christian doctrines;---to guard them, against false ones; to support them, under persecution; to arm them, against temptations; to unite them, in charity, and brotherly love. He that does not see this, can see nothing. Such a man is blind, beyond all cure, beyond all conviction.

6thly. The application of my argument, or the conclusion I would draw from it, is; That we adhere to the religion of Christ, and his Apostles; that we frame our notions

tions of it, not from the rapsodies of illiterate enthusiasts who disclaim both reason and learning, but from the Scriptures themselves; comparing one Scripture with another; explaining the harder parts by the easier, the less evident passages by those that are more so; remembering, as a certain rule, that they cannot possibly contradict each other; that they have all one main design, and all speak the same thing; that the great end which they all keep in view, towards which they all more or less contribute, is to discountenance vice, to cherish virtue, to make men wise good and happy.

The difficulties you find, especially in the Epistles, arise from the inevitable causes above-mentioned: Length of time, since they were written; change of customs, and of languages; local errors or prejudices which they were intended to refute, and the knowledge of which must in a good measure be lost. These and the like circumstances, unavoidably create some obscurity in the sacred, as in all other ancient writings. But then it is an obscurity, that ought not to give you a moment's concern. Because the essential articles of belief and



duty upon which your salvation depends, have an eternal perspicuity; are as perfectly intelligible to us now, as they were to the people, who first read them.

I shall only add, that the not duly regarding the moral parts of scripture, the not considering the gospel in its original view, as a scheme divinely instituted for the promotion of human virtue;---this fundamental evil has given birth to all the pretended inspirations, to all the wild and wicked forgeries, with which mankind has been deluded, under the name of christianity, from the times of the apostles to this very day. Papists, Moravians, Methodists, (not to mention the numberless tribes of hereticks, that distracted the primitive churches) all owe their existence to this single cause.

Having then before your eyes this fatal rock, on which the faith has so often suffered shipwrack; "Let no man deceive you with vain words," or entice you to forsake the genuine christianity: Which can no where be found; in no specious subtleties, devised and propagated by men of corrupt minds; but in the plain duties of a godly life. These are what we all comprehend;

prehend; and our obligations to which, were never yet controverted, except by the most ignorant, or the most profligate, of the human race. These form the religion that belongs to us, as men, as christians; that is founded in nature, and perfected by revelation. A religion, which was never heard from the mouth of any impostor, since imposture began. Men of that character, love darkness, and dark doctrines, far better than light, and plain truth; for the obvious reason, given by St. John; 'Because the former are far more agreeable, to their deeds, and their designs.'

That these men, with all others, may see their errors, and reform them; that all invidious distinctions of sect, or party, may cease; that all who profess themselves ministers of the gospel, may set it forth to the world in its native simplicity;---ought to be the daily prayer of every creature here present.

I cannot more properly finish this discourse, than in the same affectionate words of St. Paul, with which it began. "Be ye followers of God, as dear children. Walk in love; as Christ hath loved us,

"and hath given himself for us. But for-  
 "nication, and all uncleanness, or covet-  
 "ousness; let it not once be named amongst  
 "you, as becometh saints. For this ye  
 "know, that no whoremonger, nor un-  
 "clean person, nor covetous man who is an  
 "idolater," whose gold is the idol of his  
 "heart, "hath any inheritance in the king-  
 "dom of Christ. Let no man deceive you  
 "with vain words. 'If ye would avoid  
 'these, or any other vices, ye must be-  
 'ware of the preachers, and of the prin-  
 'ciples, that give encouragement to them.'

To God only wise,

S E R M O N XII.

## S E R M O N XII.

I P E T E R v. 8.

*Be Sober, be Vigilant. Because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

\* T H E R E are probably few subjects more talked about among christians, than that of the power and temptations of the devil: and, which happens in various other cases, perhaps very few, that are less understood. It is in most people's mouths; and in so many writings, to so little, or so bad, effect; that infidels laugh at it; weak and superstitious minds, are frighted at it; while wicked ones lay hold of it, as an



apology for their vices, and an excuse for their sins.

It must be of signal service then, to endeavour at placing a matter like this, in its just light; in order to remove the doubts, which dishearten some; to check the presumptuous folly of others; to set before the eyes and hearts of all, a doctrine, wherein they are so importantly concerned.

Previously to which useful design, I will only just observe; that all the real intelligence men can have, respecting the existence, nature, and influence, of either good or evil spirits, must be derived from revelation. Reason may form what conjectures she can; and philosophers may invent what schemes they please: but the truth of such a matter of fact, is to be learnt from God only; the Father of all Spirits, the Creator of all Things.

To a christian therefore, in the present case, the scripture-declarations are the sole ground of opinion, the sole rule of judgment.---Building upon which sure foundation, I will crave your attention, while I

I. Bring together, and lay before you, the principal scriptures, that mention the nature,

nature, or describe the power and temptation, of the devil : shewing you, in what sense they are to be interpreted, what, and how much, is to be deduced or concluded from them. This, I hope, will clear the way,

II. To the proper method, the particular manner, in which we may withstand, or overcome, all such temptations.

The first of these heads is suggested to us, by the latter part of the text: "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The second head is pointed out by the former clause of the text, containing the advice, which the apostle gives: "Be sober, be vigilant."

I. The thing most immediately observable, is, that what we read in scripture, about the person emphatically stiled the Devil, or Satan, or the Tempter, is meant concerning a particular Spirit; as the head, prince, and captain, of many others, who all live in rebellion against God. St. Jude tells us of these angels, that "they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation."

They

They kept not their first estate.--From which words it naturally occurs, that even the best of creatures, have, originally, been put into a state of probation; in order that they might rise, according to their respective conduct or deserts, in the scale of happiness and perfection.

In this first estate, this first post or station, these apostate angels behaved ill. They left it; or, as other scriptures speak, were degraded, and cast down, from it.

What their particular sin was, is no where expressed. But, in general, we may conclude, that their crime was like that of wicked men; a transgression of some of God's plain commands. It was, most likely, a proud discontent in that situation; wherein the divine wisdom had placed them. Or perhaps it was of a similar kind with that, to which their leader tempted our first parents; namely, a restless, impatient desire, of more knowledge, into the secrets of divine providence, than their present station, and present faculties, admitted; or qualified them to attain. "Ye shall be as gods, "knowing good and evil;" was our first fatal bait of temptation.

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The end, or object, of this eager thirst after forbidden knowledge, may justly be conceived to have been, greater power, greater sway and authority, than was allotted them in their original department. But, whatever was the motive to it; it terminated in a revolt from the supreme government.

Under their expulsion from heaven for which revolt, wherein they still persist remorseless and impenitent; the scriptures represent them, as rebels, or adversaries, against God; as enemies, and opposers, of his kingdom; as setting up a new empire, to the intended injury of his eternal one.

Hence they are called thaones, "principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places." Their leader, in like manner, is called "The prince of the air; the god of this world; who worketh" wickedness, "in the children of disobedience."

This rebellion of satan against God, with his power of tempting or seducing mankind, the scriptures are wont to set forth, as they do almost every thing else, in sublime, lofty figures. The prophet Isajah,  
and



and St. John, are eminently remarkable, for doing so.--Thus, Isaiah compares the pride and fury of the kingdom of Babylon, to that of Lucifer, boasting that "he would ascend into heaven;" that "he would exalt his throne above the stars of God;" that "he would be equal to the Most High." So St. John says; "there was war in heaven. Michael, and his angels, fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought, and his angels. And the Old Serpent called Satan, who deceiveth the whole world, was cast out: and his angels were cast out with him." So, again. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth! For the devil is come down, having great wrath; because he knoweth, that he hath but a short time."

Now, either the not understanding, or the not considering, the nature of this whole kind of expression, has led men into unnumbered mistakes. Some have ridiculously imagined, that this "war in heaven," was an attempt actually made by these spirits, upon the very majesty and throne of God: as if they seriously expected to rival the almighty, in government or dominion.

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It is marvellous, that there can no absurdities be named, so foolish; no blunders, so gross; as those which men are guilty of, and propagate, in divinity! How could it ever enter into any human heart to conceive, that a created, dependent being, conscious of the power which gave it existence, and which can take away that existence the next moment; should entertain the slenderest hope of success, in striving against omnipotence; in contesting the point of supremacy, with the sovereign Creator! If the fallen angels had no higher faculties, no deeper penetration, than poor mortals upon earth; they must know much better than this! and could never be capable, of so thinking, or so resolving. Such representations, as "war in heaven," may serve very well, to embellish an epic poem; as they have done most illustriously, in our own language. But let no creature fancy, there is any literal truth in them.

No! The rebellion of these angels was levelled, not against God's kingdom of power, but against his kingdom of righteousness; not against his natural, but against his moral, government. It was, in short,  
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an opposition to the virtue and obedience of the rational world.

Here, indeed, was some ground, for rebellion!--They, who had banished from their own hearts, all inclination to goodness; who were stung with the miseries, that of course must follow such degeneracy; They, I say, had no delight left, but to obstruct the righteousness, which they hated; to allure and draw in others, to become partners in their wickedness, and fellow-sufferers in their punishment. They knew both the use, and the abuse, of their own liberty. They knew that, wherever any duty is required, there must consequently be freedom of will;---and that, wherever there is freedom of will, there is, there must be, room for trial, or temptation to evil. Thus, only, can devils be conceived to war against God, or to fight against Heaven; as they labour to seduce the subjects of the moral world, into irregularity and vice.

In like manner. As to the concern they have, with us men; the formidable titles, under which the Scriptures describe them,

them, carry nothing dreadful, or discouraging, except in the sound.

When Satan, in the Text, and other passages, is called a Roaring Lion, the devourer, the destroyer, or the like; these expressions are intended to represent, not the terror of his power, but merely the rage of his will; not the mischief he can do, but the mischief he would do.

Again. When he, or his angels, are stiled princes, rulers, gods of this world, &c; these characters do not signify, that they possess any dominion, any irresistible influence, over us; but only that they are the patrons, the patterns and encouragers, of wickedness in us. So, when you hear them entitled, "Spirits, who work in the Children of Disobedience;"---nay, who even "Take men captive, at their will;" These and the like phrases, have exactly the same import, with that, wherein St. Paul compares the Galatians to people bewitched. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

Once more. When the Scriptures ascribe our sins to Satan, as if he were the very  
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author of them; there is nothing in the Sacred Language, but what is usual in the tongues of all nations.---Those men, to whose opinion, advice, or example, we blindly and fondly submit, are perpetually said, to lead us, to drive us, to work us at their pleasure. Not that they can deprive us of our liberty; but that we wilfully give up it, and ourselves, to their disposal.---Let me illustrate the sense of these Scriptures, by a more particular instance.

In an army, when a victory is obtained, though greatly owing to the bravery of the troops; or when the day is lost, though by unforeseen accidents, or by the cowardice of the soldiery; yet, in the language of the world, the glory or the disgrace of the action, is principally attributed to the General. To him, regardless of inferior agents, we ascribe all the operations of the campaign.

And cannot you see, by the most easy analogy, that, because God, is the fountain of all goodness; the giver of all ability

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to do good; therefore all virtuous actions are plausibly ascribed to him? As he is our Supreme example, whoever imitates him in his practise, is called the son, the child, the servant, of God; and is considered as acting, as if God immediately influenced his behaviour.

By the same mode of speaking, since Satan was the beginner, and is still the leader, of vice; all vicious persons are denominated his servants, children of the devil, &c. All evil is referred to him, as the original father of it; and men are said to commit evil, as if actuated, headed, commanded, by him.

In the like stile of language, sin is called the work of Satan;---Sinners are said to be doing his work;---and the son of God is said to have been manifested, that he might destroy the work of the devil;---or might suppress wickedness, of every kind.

What has passed, will give you, I hope, a clear insight into various passages, relative to this subject.

In the first Book of Kings, you have a remarkable account, in the lofty figures of

Scripture, how Ahab's false Prophets deceived that wicked prince, whose heart was always open to error and deceit. There you read, that a council was summoned in Heaven;---that lying spirits were admitted to this council, and were sent forth from it, to inspire those false Prophets.---So, in the case of Job, you find a like assembly of Angels, in the presence of God;---of which assembly, though in heaven, Satan, it seems, was permitted to be a member;---and had Job delivered into his hands, to be tried and afflicted by him.----Just as, in St. John's Revelation, Satan is described as "Let loose, to go out, and deceive the nations."

To take these passages literally, without further inquiry, would be extremely childish; speaking in the softest terms. But, if you understand them, as strong and lively figurative descriptions; they then convey a noble, as well as an instructive, meaning. ---Ahab's flattering Prophets betrayed him as effectually, to his destruction; as if lying spirits had actually possessed them.---The pious Job was plundered by a band of barbarous Arabs, and was afflicted with sickness

ness to as sore a degree, as if Satan had been really invested with a commission to torment him.

Our Savior has an expression, in his Parable of the sower, which, if not purposely mistaken, will throw light upon all others of a similar nature.---He there says, concerning giddy, negligent hearers of his word, "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that, which was sown in their hearts." Not that the most wicked spirit has literally any power, to rob men of their understanding, or to steal away their sentiments: But that the heedless inattention of many people is such, as renders all good instruction, as utterly lost upon them, as if it were instantly and forcibly snatched out of their minds.

Furthermore. You meet with several passages, in which Satan is said to corrupt men's hearts with evil thoughts, or to put into their hearts, to do wickedly. He put into the heart of Judas, to betray his master. He filled the heart of Ananias, to impose upon, and to abuse, the Apostles.---All which places, with a little consideration, shew their own meaning. b. "Judas," says



St. John, "Carried the Bag, and was a Thief;" consequently might be bribed; into any piece of treachery. Ananias, likewise, gave up his heart, to the love of money; consequently to falsehood, for the sake of it. Thus these men, knowingly and willingly, exposed themselves to temptations; from Satan, as well as from every other quarter.

For I beg you will take notice, that what the Sacred Writers say, concerning the part which the devil bears in these transactions, carries in it no excuse, no alleviation, of the crimes committed: Which crimes, on the contrary, are always mentioned as matters of the highest wickedness in the persons guilty of them.

Let us see, how the latter passage about Ananias, will clear up the former about Judas; and indeed all, that resemble it.

"Ananias," says St. Peter to him; "why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost?" A terrible charge (as his punishment demonstrates) against Ananias himself, as well as against Satan. "Why have you abandoned yourself to such covetousness, and fraud, to such a compli-  
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“ance with the temptations of evil spirits, and to such an imitation of their evil example, as if they had gained possession of your very soul?”

The great end of collecting and expounding the foregoing scriptures, is; To supply every christian with a short, satisfactory answer, to two or three materially interesting questions: the third and most extensive of which, shall be reserved for the subject of my next discourse.

The first inquiry is, “Why do wicked spirits tempt us men? What is it, that can move them to do so?” You may answer this question, by proposing another, which will presently resolve it. “Why do wicked men tempt one another?” Look into nature, and you will see the reason:--- Consult experience, and that will confirm it.

A rational, social creature, when he has once addicted himself to vice, knows no pleasure equal to that, ‘Of obstructing the growth of virtue.’ No such being can endure to be wicked alone. And, though it is a very cruel delight; it is yet a natural one: “To wish for, to seek after, companions; even in guilt and misery itself.” So

the Book of Wisdom rightly states the case, of satan, and of evil men. Of the former, he says, "Through envy of the devil, "came death into the world:" Of the latter, "Let us lie in wait for the righteous, because "he is not for our turn. His life is not like "ours. His ways are of another fashion."

An excellent use might be made, of this remark: and happy should we be, if profligate men would attend a little to it.---- You cannot be grossly lewd, in your single persons only: You cannot possibly be enemies, to yourselves alone. You will of course be enemies to the very people, to whom you falsely call yourselves friends. You will, you must, tempt or entice them, to become like you. And while you resolutely sin against your own souls, the souls of others will be laid to your charge.

The second question, to which you would perhaps gladly be enabled to give a satisfactory answer, is, "How, to what degree, "and with what power, do wicked spirits "over-rule us?"---Your reply may safely be this; that, in reality, they have no power at all, I mean no compulsive power, over us. They have no such power, over the natural world.

world. Nor could a whole legion of them, extinguish the light of a single star; or, for one moment, alter the course of the smallest planet. Much less have they any dominion, over the moral world. The mind of man; the liberty of our will, of our consent and actions, as free agents; are far beyond the reach of their controul. Tempt us indeed they may, and they do. In what precise manner, is very immaterial for us to know. It is enough, that we know, from our own feelings, as well as from God's explicit promise, that they can never put us to any trial, above what we are able to bear.

Let the third question then, and that wherein we are most deeply concerned, be;  
 "What measures we are to take, what conduct is required of us, in order that we  
 "may avoid, or overcome, the above-mentioned temptations." To which question, the caution given in the first part of the text, is a full general answer. "Be sober, be vigilant."

The several branches, however, of this comprehensive duty, will be an ample fund, for another discourse.

To God, only wise.



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wherein we are most deeply concerned, be-  
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comprehensive duty, will be an ample field  
for another discourse. To God only who  
knows the heart, be the glory.

S E R M O N XIII.

I. PETER V, 8.

*Be Sober, be Vigilant. Because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

\* **A**T my entrance upon this subject, I remarked, how common a theme in the mouths of Christians, is the power, or temptation, of devils; and yet how little it is understood: That it highly deserves, to be well considered: And that, as it is a matter of pure Revelation, the only true method of treating it, is; To collect the principal Scriptures which speak about it, to shew their proper meaning, and to sum up

up the whole of what may be learnt from them.

These articles formed the first part of my design : The substance of which, it will be necessary to repeat ; in order to render the second part, the more clear, and the more useful.

The Scriptures, then, set forth Satan, and all evil spirits, as far as they are concerned with God or with us men, in a great variety of language ; though, almost always, in the eastern stile, of high and lofty figures : Which may, perhaps, terrify some Christians ; but can terrify such Christians only, as either do not understand, or will not attend to, them.

These spirits are represented, as heads of a kingdom ; as Princes, Rulers, Gods of this world, and the like : Only because they are the leaders, the inventors and examples, of all wickedness.---They are described, as enemies to the true God, as rebels against him, and as waging war in Heaven ; not because they dare to oppose God's kingdom of power, but because they oppose, or disturb, his kingdom of righteousness.---Again, They are stiled adversa-  
rica

rice to us, roaring lions, and devourers; not to denote the force of their power, but the malicious rage of their wills or desires.

---Once more. Men are said to fall into the snare of the devil, when, with open eyes, they commit such actions, and indulge such passions, as those, wherein he originally ensnared himself.---Lastly. In the same metaphorical language, we are led captive by him, and have our sins ascribed to him, no otherwise, than as he is the great example of vice;---and as we voluntarily yield ourselves, to follow that example.

When the Scripture therefore speaks of turning men from the power of Satan, it means nothing more, than recovering them from the power of their own evil habits; from the dominion of their own lusts, and debaucheries. Accordingly, the place St. John mentions in the Revelation, as the seat or throne of Satan, was only the country of Pergamos, where corruption and idolatry notoriously prevailed.

The simple truth then is this. That, in strictness of expression, evil spirits neither have, nor can have, any power over us.

Their



Their proper character, is that of tempters ; and their only work, is temptation. In what manner, they immediately and personally attack the minds of men, we know not : Nor can we distinguish any secret suggestions of other spirits, from the operations of our own minds. One thing only is clear : That the general means of their success against us, and the instruments by which they generally work upon us, are men's temptations, or corruptions, of each other. And it is certainly the same thing to us, whether any temptation comes directly from the enemy himself ; or from inferior agents, who promote his cause. It is also equally certain, that, if he can tempt us by himself in any one secret way ; we can openly and impudently tempt each other, in a great abundance of ways : by our looks and gestures ; by our words and arguments ; by our actions and examples ; nay, by our influence and authority, even by penalties and persecutions.

Wherefore I shall not scruple to affirm, that for one sin, which is the immediate inspiration of Satan, there are many hundreds wrought

Their

wrought in us by our own passions, or by the instigation of other men.

But no matter how the evil is produced. The Scripture calls it the work of Satan. And, let who will tempt us; our remedy, our rule of caution, for avoiding the effects of temptation, is still the same. In the Text particularly, you have the best advice, that can be given. The sense of which, though delivered in four plain words, is copious and large. "Be sober, be vigilant."

II. The Apostle's Precept may either be considered as an excellent rule in general; or it may be divided into several particular branches, all of signal use and advantage.

I. In general, you have here a most effectual preservative, against all temptation to evil. Namely, that he, who would shun the hurtful influences of other spirits, must first take due care of his own spirit.

The state we are placed in, subjects us, by the wise appointment of providence, to sundry trials, and enticements to sin. Otherwise, there would be no room for the exercise, nor consequently for the promotion or reward, of virtue.

Now

Now these enticements may come, indeed, from abroad : but the foundation of all their bad effects, is laid at home. You read (and you should read, with peculiar comfort) what our blessed master said, concerning himself. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Satan could find no passions, no propensities, in that divine breast, fit for him to work upon. A settled habit of goodness, had disarmed the enemy, of all ability to shake, or discompose it.

And thus would it be, in proportion, with every one of us, if we fortified our minds with pious resolutions, and a steady attachment to what is virtuous. All that any temptation could then do, would only be, to awaken us to arms, as it does a brave soldier. Every suggestion of evil, would then quickly end, in a more manly aversion to the commission of it. For temptation is not sin : and the having an evil thought, or an inclination to a vicious pleasure, is not a direct vice. Such temptations may sometimes be unavoidable. They may be violently thrown into us, may be artfully laid in our way, may spring from foreign causes. It is our own  
fond

fond entertainment of them, that ripens them into criminal desires: It is the welcome they find in our own choice, that alone can bring them forth into action. And such a welcome they will never find, except where some wilful neglect has left the heart unprepared, with generous sentiments, and honest principles. But, wherever evil customs have been suffered to take root; where the sense of duty has decayed; and the reins have been let loose to lewd imaginations; there your defence is lost; your enemy has free access; and, whether they be devils or men that tempt you, your resistance will be very feeble!

2. Hence we are led to a very material branch of the apostle's extensive advice: namely, 'That every man should be especially vigilant against those vices, to which he feels himself personally subject; or most frequently disposed to indulge.'

When St. Paul exhorts the Hebrews, to "run with patience the race that was set before them;" it is an admirable direction, which he gives them, for removing such impediments, as the grand adversary might raise, to stop their progress. "Let

" us



lay aside every weight." Let us cast away all sinful lusts, and evil habits. But there is one, upon which, above all, every person must keep a watchful eye: namely, the sin that doth so easily beset us: the passion, to which our worldly business, and manner of life, may incline us; or to which our bodily constitution may render us peculiarly prone. In some, this passion is hasty anger; in others, it is sudden resentment: in one, it is incontinence; in another, ambition. Nobody, but themselves, knows the particular modes, or degrees, of temptation, to which particular men lie exposed.

Here then it is, that you must watch your heart, and be ever upon your guard. This is your point of honour: in this consists the trial of your virtue. Secure this pass, with all your forces; and your danger will presently be over.

When any inclination presses you hard; when any enticement attacks you strongly, on your weaker side; remember, that the empire of will is yet your own, that reason and reflection are yours still, that nothing but yourself can rob you of them. Call

up

up all the arguments of conscience. Dwell upon these arguments a due time, before you begin to act; and then the victory will not fail you. Whereas, if once you dismiss this faithful guard; you lay yourself open to every adversary, you become an easy prey to the first invader, a cheap purchase to the first bidder. The scriptures, which promise you every divine help, even "the whole armour of God," will now afford you no assistance, nor leave you any excuse.

St. James was perfectly acquainted with the state of your case. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God;" that God puts him into such circumstances, where he is tried beyond his strength. "For," in this sense, "God tempteth no man." No! Whenever you are drawn, or seduced, into evil; it is by your own lust; by a lust, which you had power to overcome, but would not exert that power.

3. There are other vices, which you must conscientiously avoid; if you wish to live unhurt by the particular enemy under consideration. I mean those vices, wherein

men most immediately resemble him; for which the scriptures call them, "children of Satan;" as if they were descended from him, and had him for their very father: vices, to which he is most fond of tempting us; which are the source of many other vices, lead us into them, and confirm us in them.

And here I might produce, as a specimen of my meaning, pride, all impatient, haughty discontent, in our present condition. What enterprizes does not such a restless disposition put into men's heads? hurrying them from one sinful project, to another;—and driving them on, as it did the first wicked spirits, too fast to look back, or to think of repentance.

The worst, because the most extensively mischievous species, of this devilish vice, is an immoderate thirst of power: Which was the original instance of sin against heaven; which gendered all the other malignant crimes, of Satan, and his followers. St. Paul appears quite clear, in this matter; when he gives Timothy the true character of a christian bishop, or church-governor. Such a man must be "sober, and of good behavior;

"behavior; not lifted up with pride, lest he fall into the condemnation of the devil;" lest he fall into the same transgression, by which Satan first wrought his own ruin.

Concerning the apostate angels, St. Jude says, that "they kept not their first estate." Now the word, which our translation calls estate, certainly signifies a post of authority. Whence we have great reason to believe, that these angels were dissatisfied with the share of power, which God had assigned them, and aspired to more. What they would have done with more power, if it had been granted them; God only knows. In all probability, they would have behaved, as ambitious men behave, when they get too much power. They would have tyrannized over others, and forced them into unreasonable submissions.

For oppression, or an abuse of power, especially in matters of religion, is the top-work of the devil! And those men who are guilty of it, are always pictured in scripture, as having him for their leader. Thus, the figurative passage, wherein St. John represents Satan, as "coming down



“upon earth full of wrath,” is only a mournful prediction of the persecutions that should fall upon the christian church, in after ages. The description is delivered in the lofty stile of prophecy: but it was men, distressing the true professors of the gospel, that acted the bloody tragedy. Which they did with such furious malice, as if Satan himself had come from hell, and put himself at the head of them.

4thly. Let me recommend to you a most diligent care, not to relapse into any vice, from which you have once recovered yourself.

When you have tried your strength, have found it successful; and then afterwards, yield it up afresh to your adversary; you give him all the advantage he can wish for; you resign your arms; and leave yourself, defenceless, to the mercy of temptation.

Our Savior has set forth the condition of such persons, by comparing their return to their former bad habits, to Satan's returning into a man, after he had been cast out of him. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, and has wandered about in a restless disposition to do evil; when he has been tampering

pering with other men to no purpose, has found their inclinations dry, and cold to all his temptations;---He then returns, to renew his attack upon the man, out of whom he was cast. And because the man, by wilfully neglecting himself, has fallen back into the sins, he pretended to forsake; his heart is compared to a house, ready swept and garnished, for the re-admission of its old possessor.

The moral of this image, is exceedingly instructive.---Men who have an effectual remedy for their vices, and either obstinately refuse to apply it, or, after being relieved by it, voluntarily run into the same distemper again, are in a more perilous situation, than when the disorder first began. For now it will gather additional strength;---just as Satan did not return into the man alone; but brought with him seven other spirits, as malevolent as himself; who all entering in, and dwelling there, rendered the man's last state, far worse than the first.

This similitude exactly suits the sense of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews.---  
 "Those who have once been enlightened,  
 "who have tasted the good word of God,  
 "and been made partakers of the Holy

"Ghost; if they shall fall away, it is impossible" (it is extremely difficult) "to renew them again unto repentance."

5. The time obliges me to comprise my remaining topicks of advice, under one head.

The best rule for avoiding the power of temptation, is to shun all the occasions of it; as the sure, and inexcusable means, of falling by it, is wantonly to throw yourself into the way of it; to get into that mode of living, into that company, into those sports or diversions, by which; you have reason to fear, your virtue will be shaken, your passions inflamed, and your resolution put to a dangerous proof.

Nothing is more apparent, than that most men are the authors of their own temptations. We do, as Sampson did; who, if he would but have kept at home, and had not gone feasting about, among the Philistines; would never have been fooled by Harlots, and robbed of all his strength. The case was precisely the same, with Dinah. She too must needs gratify her silly curiosity, and visit the idolatrous daughters of the land; where she lost her innocence, and disgraced her whole family.

We

We every day pray, or ought to pray, that God would not lead us into temptation. Not meaning to request, that we may live entirely exempt from all trials ;----which would be to pray, against virtue herself. But, in this petition, we express our dependence upon God ; that he will render our own sincere endeavours effectual, to prevent the bad consequences of all temptations. They therefore, who wilfully run into the high road of temptation, make a mock of God, and a jest of their own devotions.

To this let me add, that there is no one thing, from which you ought more solicitously to fly, than idleness ; or the want of proper employment.---Your minds are, by nature, formed for action.---They must, they will, have something in agitation. If you do not provide some good, or at least some innocent matter, for them to work upon ;---they will infallibly provide some mischievous business for themselves. The door will stand open, to every comer. And the first that approaches, however unworthy a guest, will find a ready admittance. On the other side, industry feeds the mind with serious pleasures ; and forestalls the desire of  
vain



vain amusements. It keeps the passions in due decorum, carries on life within the peaceful limits of sobriety and usefulness.--- You will naturally understand me to mean here, not knavish or sordid, but honest industry : That industry, which, by the constitution of things, is essentially necessary to the present welfare, both of yourselves, and of the community.

To conclude. Collect all the hints I have given you. Put together all the helps, that reason, experience. and scripture, afford you. Pray to God, for the assistance of his Spirit ; that you may make a due improvement of all these means.

Particularly ; for your encouragement to strive against evil spirits, and every other tempter to evil ; remember the words, that follow the Text : " Whom " (namely Satan) " resist, stedfast in the faith ; knowing that " the same afflictions " (the like trials, under some shape or other) " are accomplished in " your brethren, who are in the world." ---Temptations are inseparable from us, as moral agents. Without them, virtue would be a mere negative thing, It would be absolutely

solutely uncertain, and even unknown, to the virtuous man himself!

For your further encouragement, to encounter the adversaries of your piety, and salvation; keep in constant mind the words of St. Paul: Who solemnly assures you, that, if you do your best, which is the indispensable condition; "God will never suffer you to be tempted, beyond what he himself has enabled you to bear." Which indeed is self-evident, from every religious or rational idea you can frame, of a divine governor.

Lastly. Let me dismiss you with the declaration of St. James, as the most animating argument of all. Namely that, "If you resist the enemy so often mentioned, he will flee from you;" and will leave you, not barely victorious, but in certain hope of receiving an eternal crown of reward, for your victory. Such is your Savior's gracious promise: "To him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me upon my throne; and to eat the fruit of the tree of life."

To the King Eternal.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and  
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you  
 are well and happy. I have been very busy  
 lately, but I have managed to find some time  
 to write to you. I have been thinking of you  
 very much lately, and wondering how you are  
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# S E R M O N . XIV.

I. CORINTHIANS, xi, 24.

*This do, in Remembrance of Me.*

UPON hearing me repeat these well-known words, as my Text; I take for granted you will immediately conceive, that 'I purpose to make the Holy Sacrament the subject of the following discourse.' That is indeed my design. And that you may the better understand what I shall have to say, in the prosecution of it; I will lay before you the whole passage, from which the text is cited.

"I received of the Lord," says the Apostle, speaking to the Corinthians on this occasion, "That which I also delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same



" same night in which he was betrayed,  
 " took bread :---and, when he had given  
 " thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his  
 " Disciples;---saying, take, eat:---This is  
 " my body, which is broken for you.----  
 " This do, in remembrance of me. In like  
 " manner, after supper, he took the cup;  
 " and gave it to them; saying, drink ye all  
 " of this. For this is my blood of the  
 " New Testament, which is shed for you,  
 " and for many" (for all, who will em-  
 brace and obey my religion) " for the re-  
 mission of sins. This do, as oft as ye  
 " drink it, in remembrance of me." Or,  
 " for a remembrance of me;" as it is ex-  
 pressed, in the margin of our Translation.

Now, by this account of St. Paul, which  
 I have endeavoured to render somewhat  
 more perfect from those given in the Gos-  
 pels;---by this account, I say, but espe-  
 cially by the words I have chosen for the  
 Text; it will be easy to discern, what is  
 the nature of the Holy Sacrament, or of  
 the Lord's Supper; upon what principle,  
 it was originally instituted; and what obli-  
 gations we are under, to attend the celebra-  
 tion of it.---These three points (to which I  
 shall

shall confine myself, in the present sermon) it highly concerns all Christian people to be acquainted with : and they seem to comprehend by far the most essential part of the subject.

Yet, though these are the three capital points ; there are several remarks necessary to be made ; several things necessary to be observed ; in order to give you a more particular insight into this important article of our Christian devotion ;---but, above all, to warn you against, or to recover you out of, many mistakes, false notions, and abuses, which, from various causes, as well as from different quarters, have long ago been introduced into it,--- To make such remarks therefore, with some hopes of preventing, and of rectifying these errors, shall be the business of a subsequent discourse.

I, then ; It evidently appears, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a rite, a sacred ordinance ; in which we remember, or call to mind, our Savior : in which we commemorate the benefits we have received, from his coming into the world : in which we reflect upon the doctrines he has taught

us, and upon the moral precepts he has delivered to us as the rules of our conduct.

Now the grand benefit we receive from the appearance of Christ in the world, is, the forgiveness of our sins, upon our hearty repentance, through the merits of his death, or by virtue of the atonement it has made for them.

The doctrines he has taught us, are such as were unknown, or very imperfectly known, to the world, at least to the heathen world, before his birth: Particularly, the unity, the spiritual nature, and moral perfections, of the deity: The immortality of the human soul: A future, universal, judgment of God, upon mankind: A state of just retribution, of just rewards and punishments, in consequence of that judgment.

The laws which he has prescribed for our moral conduct, are; The love and fear of the supreme power, that created us: Justice, truth, and mercy, to each other: Temperance and sobriety, to ourselves.

These benefits then I say, these admirable doctrines, these excellent commands, we bring, I mean we ought to bring, it was designed we should bring, to our own, and

to one another's serious remembrance; whenever we meet together, at the holy communion. Which, I most frankly declare to you, is the best explanation, the best description, I am able to give, of that solemnity. But I will refer you to an infinitely better authority than mine.

St. Paul himself has summed up the whole of what I have offered upon this first head, in the twenty-sixth verse; where he has left us his own definition, his full idea, of the Lord's Supper; comprehending all he had before been speaking about it. "For as often," says he, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shew the Lord's death, till he come." That is, 'The eating this sacramental bread, and the drinking this wine, by you and all succeeding christians, is intended to shew forth, or to be a representation of, your Savior's death, with the blessings that flow from it, the happy circumstances that attend it, as long as the christian dispensation shall last; or till Christ shall come the second time, to call us all to judgment.' Thus much, for the nature of



## SERMON XV.

the holy sacrament; or for the rite itself.

II. The principle upon which it was founded by our heavenly master, being the next thing we are to consider, is evidently this;—that the remembrance of the benefits we have received from him, is the way to make us sensible of them, to make us thankful for them. The recollection of the doctrines he has taught us, is the way to make them familiar to our thoughts, and well understood by us. The remembrance of his moral precepts, is the way to make us observant of them, the means of inducing us to live and act according to them.

In all these instances, forgetfulness produces, it cannot possibly but produce, the quite opposite effects. Thus, The being forgetful of any persons, implies an unconcern about them; an indifference to their welfare, to their authority, and to every thing else that relates to them. The being forgetful of any truths, or of any doctrines, is equivalent, while it continues, to an absolute ignorance of them. The being forgetful of any duties, infallibly leads,  
first

first to the omission, and then to the positive transgression, of them.

All this holds good, not in religion only; not in the mere imaginations of a few speculative moralists, or divines; but in common life, and throughout human nature. It is a lesson we are every day reading to others, however little we regard it ourselves. We are perpetually blaming those over whom we have any authority, for the crime of 'Forgetting what they ought to remember,' and for the mischiefs that follow it.

The principle therefore, upon which the rite of the Lord's supper was instituted, is the same (making due allowance, for the difference of the subjects) upon which all solemnities, in commemoration of any great men and public benefactors, are founded. All festivals, all such I mean as are of a laudable kind, however they may differ in the degree of their importance, have one common origin, one general source. The object likewise of them all, is the same; and is this, -- that 'posterity may revere the memories, may admire and imitate the virtues, may follow the good ad-

‘vice and the good examples, of distinguished persons, whom providence from time to time has raised up, to be the lights of the world, and the friends of mankind.’ By attending to which last words, you will clearly perceive, that, in every such commemoration, the goodness of God, his providential care and government over us, should be uppermost in our thoughts.

The author of Ecclesiasticus, was no stranger to the principle, on which these public acts are built; and which is a truly political, as well as a moral and religious, one. Hear his own incomparable words, in the forty-fourth chapter of the book, which bears that name.

“Let us praise famous men; by whom  
 “the Lord hath wrought great glory, from  
 “the beginning. Who gave counsel by  
 “their understanding, and declared prophecies. Who were leaders of the people;  
 “wise and eloquent in their instructions.  
 “All these were honored in their generations, and were the glory of their times.  
 “They were merciful men; whose righteousness shall not be forgotten. Their  
 “bodies are dead, and rest in peace: but  
 “their

"their name liveth for evermore. The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will shew forth their praise." Such were the sentiments of this eminent Jew: who ought himself to be ranked among the worthies he celebrates: and whose book has deservedly been graced with the title of "The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach."

This learned man well knew, that upon the same principle which I am here considering, all the Jewish feasts (especially their grand feast the passover, of which I shall have occasion to take particular notice afterwards) were established, by the appointment of God himself.---All these, indeed all the ritual parts of the Jews' religion, as the books of Moses abundantly demonstrate, had one ultimate end in view:---To recall, at stated seasons from age to age, into the memory of that forgetful people, the love which God had shewn to them, the wonders he had done for them, the statutes and laws he had given them: "with an intent," as the psalmist tells us, "that their posterity might know these things, and the children which were yet unborn; that



“ they might put their trust in God, might  
 “ remember his works, and keep his com-  
 “ mandments.”---But let us return, from  
 the affairs of God’s ancient church, to what  
 more closely concerns his present one; I  
 mean,

III. To the third and last point pro-  
 posed; to enquire into the obligations all  
 christian people are under, to attend the  
 celebration of the Holy Sacrament.-----  
 Which obligations are very near at hand,  
 and will be found with very little trou-  
 ble.

The first of them, and which would  
 alone be sufficient without any other, is;  
 that our Lord has expressly enjoined it;  
 first, to his immediate disciples; and, af-  
 ter them, to all succeeding christians.  
 Which injunction is delivered, from his own  
 mouth, by three of the Evangelists, and by  
 St. Paul in the passage before us. And this  
 injunction, I say again, is an obligation, that  
 must appear amply sufficient, to all sincere  
 believers in him; to all who sincerely re-  
 verence his divine authority.

But Christ never acts, like too many  
 arbitrary human potentates, by mere will;  
 without

without ever condescending to assign any reason for it. No! He enjoins neither this, nor any one thing else in his whole religion, but upon the wisest reasons.----The substance of which reasons, in the present case, is most visibly contained under the foregoing head.----Namely, The manifest tendency of the Holy Sacrament, both to beget and to preserve in our minds, a grateful sense of what he has done and suffered for us, a knowledge of what he has taught us, and a regular obedience to what he has commanded us.

No other consequences can be conceived to arise from such a remembrance of Christ, as he has enjoined in the Text, and as I have been describing----A remembrance of him, in the several relations he bears to us, as our Redeemer, Divine Instructor, Supreme Master, and final Judge---A remembrance, at the same time, of ourselves; of the profound regard indispensably due to him from us, throughout these relations.

If such then be the nature of this Sacred ceremony, and such the effects it will naturally produce in those who conscientiously observe it; the obligations to do so, must

be apparent to every real Christian, without any formal multiplicity of words, or tedious length of argument. Instead of which needless undertaking, let me earnestly exhort you to put in practise, what you sufficiently know to be your duty. Let me remind you of a maxim, which I have had too frequent occasion to mention :---that  
 'It is not the want of evidence, or of conviction, but the want of thought, the want of consideration, that makes men neglect this, as well as every other office of religion.'

The melancholy truth is---The things of the present world, take up our whole attention. Its vicious cares in your graver characters, and its vicious pleasures in gayer ones, are the bane of all godliness; of all that is rational, right, or good.---They make us forgetful of every duty we owe, to our Creator, our Savior, our neighbor, and ourselves. To ourselves, I say. For all sin against God, and against other men, is sin also against ourselves;---against our own interest, against our own happiness.---It is generally speaking, so in this life;---but will infallibly be so, in the next; as I have

have often told you elsewhere, and shall not here insist upon it.

You will plainly see, that I am now pointing at that great number of merely nominal Disciples of Christ, who carelessly, and wilfully, absent themselves from, or refuse to join in, the celebration of the Sacrament. Who waste the time they should employ in doing honor to their Savior, either in doing nothing at all, or else in doing what is far worse than nothing. How great this number is, I leave your own observation to inform you.

As for those honest, well-meaning Christians, who wish to partake of the Holy Communion, but are deterred from doing so through any weak scruples or needless fears, which they have learnt by reading injudicious books, or by conversing with injudicious men; I will endeavor to satisfy such scruples, and to remove such fears, in a following discourse.----Wherein, besides making some other suitable remarks, I shall take notice of fundry errors, misunderstandings, and abuses, to which this sacred rite, as well as almost every part of our Holy Religion, has been subjected, by the igno-



rence, the superstition, or the artifices, of mankind. From which universal sources of corruption, these errors have sprung up, not barely in Popish countries, where they are much less to be wondered at, but even among Protestant people, who, having far more light, ought, in proportion, to have more knowledge. But so it is! Men, under all circumstances, under all the advantages whether of nature or of grace, are men still. Capable (especially in matters that concern religion) of deceiving, and of being deceived!---Of this, however, I shall speak nothing further, now; nor anticipate what is to come; but shall, for the present, take leave of the subject; with my best wishes, that what I have already been able to say upon it, may prove instructive and useful to you.

To God only wise.

## S E R M O N XV.

I CORINTHIANS, xi, 24.

*This do, in Remembrance of Me.*

**I** Divided, as you may recollect, my first discourse upon these words, into three general heads. Under which I purposed to shew you, I, The nature, the definition, the proper idea, of the Holy Sacrament;---II, The principle on which, or the reason for which, it was instituted by our blessed Master;---III, The obligations, which all Christians are under, regularly to attend the celebration of it.

These three points I discussed, in the best manner I was able. And, though they certainly comprehend the main of the subject; yet I judged, that some remarks would be necessary,

necessary, not merely to give you a more particular insight into it; but, principally, to obviate, or to correct, sundry mistakes; both in opinion, and in practise, that have intruded themselves into this, as into almost all other religious matters.---These remarks therefore, which could not be contained in the compass of my former sermon, I reserved, as fit matter for the present one.

IV. I, then. The Christian Sacrament is taken, or copied (if I may so speak) from the Jewish Passover. It is to Christians, though in a higher sense, what the Passover was to the Jews. As the eating the Passover, was a commemoration to that people, of their deliverance from their slavery in Egypt; so our eating the Sacramental bread, is a commemoration to us, of our deliverance from the slavery of our sins, from all their fatal consequences, through the mediation of Christ, and the merits of his death. Accordingly, this service was instituted by our Lord, as appears from the three Evangelists, at the end of his celebration of the Jewish Passover with his Disciples, and before they rose from table.---Moreover: The eating bread devoutly broken, and the drinking a cup of wine,

wine, as here directed by our Savior to the persons present with him, was part of the ceremony used by the Jews, at their feast of the Passover\*. When St. Paul therefore, in the fifth Chapter of this Epistle, calls Christ our (Christian) Passover; and tells the Corinthians in what manner they ought to keep the feast; he manifestly alludes to the same affinity between the two solemnities, at which I am pointing.

2dly. The Holy Sacrament, is a very simple rite. It consists in the single act of eating bread and drinking wine, by an assembly of Christian people, in remembrance of Christ; of the relation he bears to us, as our Redeemer, Law-giver, and Judge:— in remembrance of his love towards us, of the things he did and suffered for us; of the doctrines he has taught us, and the precepts he has given us for our practise.

All this I have made indisputably plain, in my preceding discourse. Though it is sufficiently so, to every intelligent unprejudiced mind, from the account delivered by

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\* See Mr. Lock's Paraphrase, 4th Edition; P. 112.



three of the Writers of the Gospels, as well as by St. Paul in the passage before us.

3dly, therefore. Since the Sacrament is so plain, in its nature, and its meaning;---the mystery that has been made of it, the dark notions that have been conceived about it, the errors and corruptions that, from time to time, have been introduced into it, are the more wonderful, and might I not add, the more criminal?---Of these perversions of this sacred ceremony, I shall now take notice; I mean of the principal, and most public, of them. For to enumerate the several particular misapprehensions of it, is far beyond my power. They are as various, as the imaginations of the persons, that entertain them; as the accidental causes and circumstances, that give rise to them.---Wherefore,

4thly. The most flagrant of these perversions, is the transubstantiation of the Roman Catholics. Whose priests have made them believe, that the sacramental bread and wine, as soon as they are consecrated, are changed in substance, are marvelously converted into the real, actual, body and blood of Christ; into that very body, into that very

very blood, which ascended with him to heaven near eighteen hundred years ago.

These curious interpreters of scripture, you see, take our Savior's words, "This is my body, this is my blood," in the literal sense, or according to the bare sound. By which same childish, absurd, method of interpretation, they might just as well suppose him to be a door, a tree, a vine, a shepherd: All which things, in the eastern stile of speaking, he figuratively, but most significantly and intelligibly, affirms himself to be.

What could induce the church of Rome to impose the belief of such egregious nonsense, of such a ridiculous impossibility, upon her people; is a paradox, great enough: but that they should tamely submit to have such a belief imposed upon them, is a still greater. The inference, however, is clear

--- To what an enormous length slavery on one side, and dominion on the other, may be carried; by the power of habit, by the force of education." This masterpiece of christian tyranny and priest-craft united, by far surpasses any thing we hear of,

of, or read of, in the most ignorant, or the most despotic, heathen governments.

Upon what pretence likewise, or with what ideas of this sacred institution, the Romish priests, when they administer the sacrament, withhold the cup from the laity, and deliver the bread only to them; whereas our Savior delivered both, without the least distinction, to his disciples, is best known to themselves. For no mortal else, I am sure, can explain; 'how any set of people, professing to be ministers of Christ, dare to take such liberties with the word of God, or so impudently to abuse the understandings of men.'-----But enough of these inexplicable matters. Let us leave the church of Rome, and come to our own church; to our own selves.

5thly, then. Another error upon this subject, much more innocent indeed, as well as much less absurd, than the former, but very common among protestants, is; 'The extraordinary preparation, the extraordinary degree of self-examination, supposed necessary to be made by every person, before he presume to receive the holy sacrament.' Which opinion has deterred,  
and

and still deter, many honest christians, from partaking of the Lord's supper; for fear they should not have duly made such a preparation.

Now I do by no means deny, that we ought to come to the holy communion, duly prepared; with a knowledge of the duty, we are going to perform; with pious thoughts, and virtuous resolutions. But I affirm, that we ought to come prepared, with the like knowledge, with the like good resolutions, to hear the word of God, to attend his public worship, to offer up our prayers and praises to him, every sabbath day. Nay, we ought, every day, to think upon God, and upon ourselves; to be habitually resolved to shun what we know will offend, to follow what we know is acceptable to, our Creator, and our Savior. These resolutions are equally necessary, at all times; and not merely when you are going to receive the sacrament. And if, after you have seriously made them, you heartily endeavor to keep them; you will be sufficiently prepared to appear before your God, at his holy table, as well as in every other place, upon every other occasion.---Your rule, in short,



short, is this----' Be neither superstitiously  
 ' fearful, of coming to the solemnity, so  
 ' repeatedly mentioned; nor heedlessly, or  
 ' presumptuously, unconcerned, in what  
 ' manner you come to it. Take the mid-  
 ' dle way, between both extremes: and you  
 ' will be sure to walk in perfect safety.'

6thly. Our scrupulous fears, and false  
 notions, concerning the preparation neces-  
 sary for a worthy participation of the Lord's  
 supper, have probably arisen, in a great mea-  
 sure, from our misunderstanding what St.  
 Paul here says to the Corinthians, upon that  
 point.---Which whole matter therefore, I  
 shall try to clear up, to the satisfaction of  
 all persons, whose minds are open to con-  
 viction.

If you will read the chapter before us,  
 from the nineteenth verse to the end; you  
 will find that the Corinthians profaned this  
 sacred ceremony, to a degree of indecency,  
 that is shocking to think of. They made a  
 feast, or what we commonly call a frolic, of  
 it. "One was hungry," as the apostle tells  
 us, "and another was drunken. They did  
 "not discern," as he expresses it, "the  
 "Lord's body:" They made no distinc-  
 tion

tion, between eating the sacramental bread, and eating bread at an ordinary meal. The richer sort brought with them a plenty of provisions, of which they ate and drank to excess; regardless of the poor, who returned home, almost as empty as they came.

In consequence of such a profanation of this holy ordinance, they "ate and drank "damnation," that is condemnation; or punishment, "to themselves." For the word, which we translate "damnation," signifies any sentence passed, or punishment inflicted, upon criminals. Accordingly, you are expressly told, in the thirtieth verse, that God punished some of these offenders with bodily sickness, and even with death: in order to deter the innocent, from the like offence; or to induce those who had been guilty of it, to reform their disorderly behavior, and to repent; that so their punishment might be taken off.

Now this was coming unprepared indeed, to the holy communion! This was indeed eating and drinking unworthily! This was a total want of self-examination.

tion, of all just sense of themselves, and of their duty.

But none of us at present, however sadly they may neglect to join in the holy sacrament, are chargeable with abusing it in this shameful manner. We only absent ourselves from it (and that is bad enough) we do not come to it, to throw scandal and disgrace upon it. Consequently this particular case of the Corinthians, does not directly concern us, nor can be directly applicable to us.

7thly. I told you, at our last meeting, that 'the grand benefit we receive from 'the death and sufferings of Christ which 'we commemorate at the holy sacrament, is 'the forgiveness of our sins, upon our sincere repentance.'----- Which important condition (upon our sincere repentance) I shall, with your leave, repeat, and enforce.

To suppose that Christ's death atones for any sins, but those that are in due time repented of, and forsaken; is to make him the minister of sin, nay the patron, the encourager, the promoter, of sin. Upon which doctrine our apostle, in the second chapter

chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, pronounces "God forbid;" as I myself do, and I hope all you that are here present.

The case is this. The merits, mediation, and passion, of Christ, procure a pardon for those sins, which we once committed, but have since reformed; and the punishment of which, without such an expiation, would still remain due. For nothing can cancel the guilt, or prevent the punishment, even of repented crimes, but the free grace of God; such as he has vouchsafed to mankind, at the intercession of his Son. It is mercy, not justice, that pardons penitent men: but mercy itself cannot, consistently with wise and good government, pardon impenitent ones.

All other notions of God's forgiveness of sins, or of Christ's blood being shed for the remission of them, are either rank superstition and enthusiasm, or something much worse. They are a flat contradiction to the whole tenor of the gospel, and to all sound religion. The form drawn up in the Liturgy of the Church of England, for the celebration of the holy communion, perfectly co-



incides with these sentiments; as I hope you well remember, and as the following words demonstrate: "We acknowledge  
 "and bewail our manifold sins. We ear-  
 "nestly repent, and are heartily sorry for  
 "our misdoings. Have mercy upon us,  
 "most merciful Father! For thy Son our  
 "Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all  
 "that is past."

Now here, I beg to ask; "How can any  
 "man earnestly repent of any sins, or be  
 "heartily sorry for any misdoings, if he does  
 "not heartily correct them? How can he  
 "possibly expect to be forgiven all that is  
 "past, if he wilfully persists in the same bad  
 "behavior for the time to come; if he does  
 "not, ever hereafter, serve and please God in  
 "newness of life?"

What I have said under this remark, leads me by an easy transition to another, very similar to it, very closely connected with it.

8. There is a practice in our church, and I suppose in others, certainly in the church of Rome, of administering the sacrament to persons in their last sickness; or upon their death-bed, as we usually term it.

I do

I do not mean to speak against this practice, in the gross. I only wish, not to have it misunderstood, or misapplied.--- I hope therefore you do not imagine, that any repentance, for a few days preceeding a man's death, and the receiving the Sacrament during that short space, can wipe off the guilt, or obtain the forgiveness, of sins, which he has been unrepentedly committing for all his life past. The consequence of such a doctrine, would be exactly the same, as that mentioned in the last article.----It would make the Gospel, a nursery of sin;--- and the Sacrament a ceremony, calculated for the propagation of sin;---to carry men to heaven, whether they will or no:---to save them, in spite of all the pains they have taken to condemn themselves. Upon such a system of religion, men would have nothing to do, but to indulge their vices till within an hour of their departure;--- and then to take the Sacrament, as their absolution from them all.---Before ever you can admit an opinion like this, you must totally abandon the use of reason, in sacred concerns: you must set piety, and common sense, at eternal variance.

I beg however, to declare again, that I do not in the least object to men's receiving the Sacrament in time of sickness, or at any other time. Very far from it, as I shall shew you presently. I would only have it received at all times, with such a disposition of mind, and with such a knowledge of the rite itself, as may render it effectual to the great purpose intended by it. Which purpose, properly, is : To make us good Christians ; or, which is just the same thing, to make us virtuous men. --- We remember Christ, and commemorate his death, to a very bad end ; --- if that remembrance of him, does not induce us to obey his laws, to live like sincere believers in him. The promotion of such an obedience among mankind, is the object of all religious rites, of all ceremonies, of all external ordinances whatsoever. They are the remembrancers of moral duty ; the means, the helps, to virtue : but she is the essence, the perfection, of godliness. The case is the same, in other parts of life : --- in civil government ; --- in the law ; --- in the courts of Princes ; --- in all great scenes.

scenes, and public assemblies. Throughout all these, matters of form, are the outward means of procuring, and of preserving, decorum of behavior, regularity of proceeding, good order, good manners : but these latter, are the things of sterling value ;--- without which, or detached from which, the former are mere empty show ; nay, are often made the instruments of knavery and deceit.

Provided therefore you receive the Sacrament, with a view of correcting your faults, of improving your virtues, and of going forward continually towards Christian perfection ; provided this, I say, be your motive ; the more frequently you receive it, the better ; whether in sickness, or in health. It will then answer the design, for which it was enjoined. It will do honor to your Savior, and will secure your own eternal happiness.

10thly. The Church of England very judiciously appoints, that the Holy Sacrament shall be constantly celebrated, and that all her members shall join in the celebration of it, at the three great anniversaries ; of the birth of Christ ; of his resurrection ; and of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles, by whose divine assistance they were enabled



to propagate and to perpetuate his religion. The church of England, I say, very judiciously appoints the Sacrament to be especially solemnized on these three occasions; on which we commemorate the three events, that most essentially concern us, as a Christian people. So wisely have our Governors provided for our spiritual welfare, if we will but be wise enough to follow their directions!

ritely. Only one thing more occurs to me, as proper to be remarked upon the subject. Our church orders, that "No persons shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, till they are confirmed by the Bishop, or are ready, and desirous, to be confirmed by him." The general meaning of which order, is this: that 'No persons shall receive the Sacrament, till they come to years of discretion; till they competently understand the nature of it, and the important purposes for which they receive it.'

In the mean time therefore: If you who have children of your own, or have the children of others intrusted to your care, "Train them up in the way wherein they should go;" if you instruct them, as well as you are able, in their duty to God and their

their neighbor ; if you regularly bring them with you hither, to learn that duty, and to hear the word of God ; if, to crown all, you set them an example of sobriety and godliness, by your general behaviour before them ;---if you thus discharge your part towards them ;---you will take the best, the only method, of preparing them for confirmation ; of qualifying them to become worthy communicants at their Lord's table, and in all other respects worthy subjects of his Heavenly Kingdom.

*Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God* To whom, only wise.

THESE words are part of St. Paul's apology for himself, before the two Roman Governors, Festus and Agrippa : wherein, taking the charge brought against him by his Jewish adversaries in a religious light, he considers the doctrine of our Saviour's Resurrection, as the principal matter of their accusation.

Being well versed in the Writings of such Prophets, he had traced to the end, from the predictions those Writings contain, that the



# S E R M O N XVI.

Ac ts, xxxvi. 8.

*Why should it be thought a thing incredible  
with you, that God should raise the Dead?*

**T**HESE words are part of St. Paul's apology for himself, before the two Roman Governors, Festus and Agrippa: wherein, taking the charge brought against him by his Jewish adversaries in a religious light, he considers the doctrine of our Savior's Resurrection, as the principal matter of their accusation.

Being well versed in the Writings of their Prophets, he had proved to them, from the predictions those Writings contain, that the  
time



time appointed for the coming of their Messiah whom they had all along expected, was already past : that Jesus of Nazareth, with whose Life and Miracles they were perfectly acquainted, whom with wicked hands they had crucified and slain, was that Great Person : and that God's having raised him from the dead, of which many different people had been eye-witnesses, was the finishing proof of his divine mission.

These were truths, highly disagreeable to the whole body of unbelieving Jews : who, partly from misunderstanding the words of their Prophets, partly from a raging love of temporal dominion, had formed to themselves quite other notions, concerning the person and kingdom of their Messiah. By a wrong interpretation of the descriptions given of him in their sacred scriptures, joined to an excessive degree of national pride, they were filled with the expectation of a glorious earthly kingdom. They thought that Christ was to be an illustrious monarch, who should not only deliver their country from the Roman yoke ; but should raise it to a pitch of eminence, far beyond what it had ever enjoyed !

The

The supposed meanness therefore of our Savior's birth; his living a life, first of obscurity, then of persecution; and at last dying the ignominious death of a criminal; did but ill suit the prejudices, or answer the expectations, of this ambitious people.--- They could never bear the idea of a Suffering Messiah; and were resolved, if possible, to stop the progress of so unpopular an opinion. Wherefore, armed with the fury natural to all such bigots, they vexed and harrassed our Lord's Disciples; particularly St. Paul; whose zeal for christianity, as well as his extraordinary conversion to it, rendered Him the more dangerous enemy.

We find the Apostle, at three different times, when he was permitted, as a free man of Rome, to speak for himself, complaining of the virulent spirit, discovered by his opposers, and strongly insisting upon the reality of our Savior's Resurrection.--- This was one of the most important articles in the religion he was preaching; one of the first things to be believed, by every sincere christian; and which it was the prime concern of the unbelieving Jew, to bring into discredit. For, allowing this fact, all that our Lord

Lord had affirmed of himself, could no longer be questioned; all the doctrines he had delivered, must be acknowledged as true; and there could not remain the smallest plea, for rejecting his religion.

If God, in whose name he had pretended to work miracles, did, by an immediate act of Almighty Power, raise him from the grave; he was undoubtedly that Supreme Prophet, whom the Jews looked for; and what he taught, was consequently a divine revelation. It could not be imagined, that an impostor should be distinguished with so signal a mark of heavenly favor; or that God would ever raise up a Deceiver, to seduce his own people. Our Lord's Resurrection therefore, was the main hinge, upon which the cause turned: and we find the Apostles, in their defences of themselves, always appealing to it, as a matter of the utmost consequence to the success of the gospel.

St. Paul, in the chapter before us, to expose the obstinacy of his persecutors, desires to know upon what grounds they presumed to judge this fact Impossible. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" If

• the proofs given of it are such, as you cannot refute; what do you see in the fact  
• attested, what do you perceive in the thing  
• itself, so hard of belief, as to make you  
• still deny the truth of it?

This seems the meaning of St. Paul's question, to the Infidels in His days. And I hope it will appear to be a question unanswerable by modern, as well as by ancient, Infidels.

In treating therefore upon this subject, I shall shew you, how unreasonable it was in the Apostle's adversaries, to object merely against the possibility of our Savior's Resurrection; which no more surpasses human belief, than any other uncommon event, nay than the most common operations of nature: the infinitely greatest part of which, notwithstanding we see them every hour of the day, are as profound a mystery, are with respect to Us as truly miraculous, as the Resurrection of the Dead.---So that, supposing St. Paul's audience a mixed company of Jews and Heathens, which it really was; I shall shew you, that neither side could have any reason to reject this fact, as a thing in itself incredible.

With regard to the Jews, nothing but a neglect



neglect of inquiring into it, and a disgust that our Lord did not answer the character their vanity had drawn of him, could have led them to deny this particular miracle. As to Possibility, it was equally difficult to account for several facts, in their own Sacred History; without considering them as immediate acts of Omnipotence. For when God, in confirmation of his promise to Abraham, delivered the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt; you read of such things performed by his interposition, as must have appeared, to future ages, full as incredible as Christ's Resurrection.

I shall pass over many of the plagues, brought upon Pharaoh in the most miraculous manner, by the hand of Moses: which are all recorded in the book of Exodus. Omitting these, I shall mention two or three miracles, to which the Jews gave the most implicit belief---That Moses's Rod, a mere lifeless piece of matter, became suddenly animated with the life and motion of a Serpent---That, at the command of God, with whom all things are possible, the great river of the country was turned into blood---That, when the Egyptians pursued the  
Belgon  
Israelites,

Israelites, in a daring opposition to his divine will; the same waters of the Red Sea, which overwhelmed the former, stood like a firm wall, for the preservation of the latter.

Those Jews therefore, who condemned christianity, because it required a belief of Christ's Resurrection and other extraordinary events, ought, by the like argument, to have renounced their own religion; which was filled with facts, equally contrary to the course of nature, and therefore, properly speaking, equally incredible.

Moreover. The Jews had upon Record an exactly similar miracle, wrought by their Prophet Elijah; in restoring to life the widow's son at Sarepta: of which you read, in the first book of Kings.---This surely might have silenced all objections to the possibility of the fact; since it was as truly a rising from the dead, as that of our Savior himself; was as universally known and believed amongst them, as any other matter, related by the Writers of the Old Testament.

The reason therefore, why the Jews denied our Lord's Resurrection, could not be,

any doubt about the natural possibility of the thing, but a gross inattention to the evidences given of it; owing, 1st, to a strong prejudice for the religion, they were brought up in; 2dly, to a want of honest resolution to give up the profits, which many of them reaped from it; 3dly, to the totally different notions they had all of them imbibed, concerning the person and kingdom of their Messiah.---These three causes, duly weighed, may perhaps account for that inflexible obstinacy in rejecting the truth, which has ever appeared so unaccountable, as to make the unbelieving Jew, a proverb, and a by-word, unto this day.

Let us next examine, what right the Gentile part of the Apostle's audience, Festus, Agrippa, and their attendants; what right they had, to cavil about the possibility of the event so often mentioned.

The Heathens, from the light of reason, and the works of God, could not but have a general sense of his divine power. They could not but know, that this power is such, as infinitely exceeds all human conception; that the visible effects, continually produced by it, lie far beyond the reach of man's understanding.

derstanding. They could not but be conscious, how vain is human wisdom; how unable to explain the most obvious appearances in the natural world! To pronounce therefore that 'God could not re-unite a soul and body, when separated by death', was the height of presumption. It was ar-rant impudence, as well as folly, to declare the thing impossible; only because they did not comprehend the Manner in which it was performed. From which same ignorance, they might have denied the possibility of their own creation, the production of plants, the formation of animals, with the other numberless events they beheld every moment.--The process, by which God effects the least of his works, is as deep a secret to us, as the Resurrection of the Dead, or the greatest Miracle whatever!

Again. Many wise men among the Heathens, professedly believed a future state; or, that the 'soul would continue, after the de-  
'cease of the body'. They were so far from pretending to think this impossible, that they were able to offer some good arguments in its behalf. Why then might not the soul, after death, be again united to the body,



dy, as well as live in a state of separation from it? What can you see, at all more incredible, in the former of these opinions, than in the latter? If they allowed the probability of a future life in general, why should they quarrel with this particular mode of it? Why should they fancy it more possible for the soul to subsist hereafter, detached from the body; than in conjunction with it? Of the two suppositions, the latter seems to be much the more easy. We know by experience, that the soul may and does live, connected with the body; but how it should perceive, or act, entirely without the body, we have not even the faintest idea.

Thus you find, that the Heathens could not, from the nature of the fact, justly object against our Lord's Resurrection. And we have before seen, that the Jews, from still superior causes, could not do it.

The use I intend to make of what has been said, when applied to ourselves, is this ---that, ' Since the same Almighty Being, ' who created both soul and body, can as ' well rejoin them after death, as he put ' them together at first; no man can refuse ' assenting to the evidence given of Christ's ' Resurrection,

• Resurrection, on account of any incredi-  
• bility in the thing itself. Consequently,  
• if it appears to be properly attested; no  
• ingenuous mind will dispute the truth of  
• it.

Now of this interesting event we have greater certainty, than of those celebrated passages in profane history, which were never suspected of falsehood. Our Lord shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs. He appeared, not to one or two only; but to all the eleven Apostles, upon different occasions: and once, to above five hundred Disciples together; the majority of whom, as St. Paul tells the Corinthians, were still living, when he wrote his first epistle.

Nor were these appearances of our Savior such, as could leave any doubt upon the minds of the Apostles. Since he conversed with them repeatedly, for no less than forty days after he was risen: and was then visibly, though miraculously, taken from them. Soon after which, according to the promise he had expressly given them, he sent down upon them the gifts of the Holy Spirit: which enabled them to speak a variety of

languages; and to work various miracles, for establishing their religion, in the most open manner: in the streets of cities, and places of public resort: in the face of enemies, with whom they were surrounded: in the presence of the learned, as well as the ignorant. Till, by this divine and powerful assistance, they quickly communicated, to almost all the then known world, the religion we now profess; which, without such a special hand of Providence, could never have overcome the unspeakable difficulties it had to encounter.

Here therefore is not only one fact, attested by five hundred eye-witnesses; but here are numerous other subsequent facts, equally miraculous, and entirely depending upon it. The Apostles not only affirmed, that they conversed with our Lord at several times, after his crucifixion; not only underwent the most cruel sufferings, for the testimony they gave of it; but were enabled, in his name, to do such mighty works, as plainly exceeded all human ability; and, without any human aid, to found an entirely new religion, that defied the resistance of Jews  
and

and Heathens, of Priests, Philosophers, and Princes.

The foregoing evidence, I presume, is such; as can hardly be produced for any other fact, that occurs in ancient history.

If the Apostles had really seen nothing of their Master, after his death; with what confidence could they have affirmed, before God and men, that 'they were witnesses of his Resurrection'? Or, which is more, why should they affirm it, at the expence of all the comforts of life? What could render them so desperately fond of an Imposture, by which they got nothing, but imprisonments, and the severest hardships? That they should persist, regardless of all the terrors that opposed them, in a falsity which was attended with neither pleasure nor profit; is improbable to the highest degree!

Men, I grant, have suffered for manifest errors; and have even laid down their lives, in defence of erroneous Opinions. But that they should undergo so much in attestation of a Fact, which they are conscious never happened; is quite another matter. In the former case, they maintain what they believe to be true; and make a merit of their suffer-



ings: in the latter, they maintain what they know to be false, and can never hope to be rewarded for. In the one, they are blinded by a mistaken zeal; by an overheated imagination: in the other (which is a case widely different) they coolly suffer, with their eyes open, and all their senses about them.

St. Paul himself therefore, cannot help declaring, 'What madness it would have been in him, and the rest of the Apostles, to incur such hardships, in the cause of a master, whom they had for ever lost; and in a service, that gave them not the smallest chance, either of a present or future recompence'. Which very argument he presses upon the Corinthians, as a demonstration of the point I am now considering.

"If Christ," says he, "be not raised; your faith is vain, and our preaching is so too. Then they also, who are fallen asleep in Christ" (who have died in the Christian Faith) "are perished. If in this life only, we have hope in Christ; we" (especially we, his persecuted Apostles) "are, of all men, most miserable." So, again: "I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord; I die daily"---  
I hardly

‘ I hardly pass a day, without hazarding my  
‘ life, by my endeavors to propagate the  
‘ gospel.’

These words were evidently spoken, not  
by a headstrong enthusiast, but by a man  
truly sensible of the dangers he was exposed  
to, soberly convinced of the facts he asserted,  
of the doctrines he enforced. They were  
plainly spoken by a man, who would never  
have given up all that was dear to him in  
this world, without sufficient assurance that  
God required it, and sufficient security that  
he would reward it.

You may safely conclude then, that the  
Apostles could have no inducement to labor  
and to suffer, in behalf of christianity; but  
the certainty that Christ was ascended into  
Heaven, to prosper their labors, and to  
crown their sufferings.

However. . Let us suppose these men as  
zealous as you please, in their Master’s cause.  
Yet how could they have wrought Miracles  
in his name, had he either remained lifeless  
in the grave, or been out of being? These  
were facts, to which the world was witness,  
and which every man might inquire into.  
Here could be no room for fraud; where  
every

every creature had the liberty of examining for himself, and of detecting the forgery. Besides---what forgery can you imagine, in persons, who were known to have no advantages from education, speaking a variety of different languages ; or healing, before multitudes, a visible disease, in a moment of time ?---Here was certainly some power concerned, more than human. And who it was, that interposed ; let the excellent morality of the doctrine tell, and the truly divine nature of the Religion !

Lastly : how could a few poor men, deprived of their leader, destitute both of human and divine assistance, ever expect to reform a world ; that is, to make it acknowledge a set of principles, utterly repugnant to all its fashions, all its prejudices, all its vices ! Or, which is something further, how could they have succeeded, in so apparently fruitless, so hopeless, an undertaking ! He that believes they might, must never pretend to upbraid christians with their faith, or to despise them for their credulity !

The sum is this---The certainty of our Lord's Resurrection, was the basis, upon which the conduct of his Apostles was entirely

tirely founded. Without this, they could have had neither encouragement to preach, nor power to establish his Gospel, in the wonderful manner, wherein we are sure they actually did establish it. And if you suppose he never left his Sepulchre; the whole scene of things after his death, the invincible fortitude of his teachers, the numerous Miracles they wrought, the rapid progress which his religion made in the world--is all inexplicable, and really incredible!

The foregoing particulars afford such evidence in favor of this grand article of our Christian Creed, as will remove all doubt from every honest heart; such as will abundantly satisfy every fair and reasonable inquirer. And for them who inquire unfairly and unreasonably, there can be no remedy provided! Such men reduce themselves to the necessity, of continuing in their error, and abiding the consequences.

In the most important transactions of common life, we every day admit, we are forced to admit, much lower probabilities, than that now before us. Without admitting such probabilities, and acting upon them too; all business would stagnate, all commerce



commerce and conversation would be absolutely at an end !

Wherefore, leaving these Infidels to the mercy of God ; let us remember, that ‘ our Lord’s Resurrection, is an infallible token, ‘ and pledge, of our own.’---It is mentioned as such, by the Apostles, in all their preaching. It is urged by them, as yielding the strongest proof of this great truth---that “ All men shall rise again with their “ bodies, and give an account of their “ works ;” that “ God has appointed a day, “ wherein he will judge the world in Righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained : of which he has given assurance “ unto all men, in that he has raised him “ from the dead.”

This therefore being the case ; how infinitely does, it concern us, to walk worthy of our christian calling, to practise the duties of a christian life !

If we had only the faintest prospect, nay if we had no prospect at all, of a future state ; it would still, in general, be both wisest and happiest, to live virtuously. But the clear view of such a state, which Revelation presents to us, makes it our universal interest,

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interest, to keep a constant guard over every part of our conduct; to be, as the good Apostle advises, “steadfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: forasmuch we know, that our labour will not be in vain.”

To the King Eternal.

SERMON XVII.

...to keep a constant guard over every  
part of our conduct: to be, as the good  
Apostle advises, "steadfast, and unmovable,"  
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bour will not be in vain.

To the King Eternal.

...that will also be, and ever be, the  
right to Jesus as a good workman.  
"work" "God" "that" "know"  
...right to know all upon this earth  
...to see in many ways that the Kingdom  
...of God is near, and to know the signs  
and tokens of the Son of Man.  
...that the King  
...the King of the world  
...to know the signs of the Kingdom  
...of God is near, and to know the signs  
and tokens of the Son of Man.

The King of the world  
...to know the signs of the Kingdom  
...of God is near, and to know the signs  
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and tokens of the Son of Man.

EXERMON XIII

The Parable was designed likewise to point out the general conduct that should be pursued from improving the advantages of Revelation; to lay open the common sources of infidelity; to warn us against the several vices,

## S E R M O N XVII.

ing the evidence, and obeying the precepts, of the Gospel: to teach us, in short, that our progress in Religion, as well as in other things, will evermore depend on the degree

MATTHEW XIII. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

*A sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some Seeds fell by the way-side---some fell upon Stony Places---some fell among Thorns---But other fell into Good Ground, and brought forth Fruit.*

**T**HIS Parable, as explained by Christ himself, was intended to represent the success of his doctrine; the immediate reception it would find in the world, from the various tempers of the Persons, who first heard it; and as they were variously inclined, to reject, or embrace it.

The



The Parable was designed likewise, to point out the general causes, that hinder men from improving the advantages of Revelation ; to lay open the common sources of infidelity ; to warn us against the several vices, which will utterly disqualify us, both for seeing the evidence, and obeying the precepts, of the Gospel : to teach us, in short, that our progress in Religion, as well as in other things, will evermore depend on the disposition of mind, with which we receive it ; that an heart free from prejudice, and open to conviction, is a necessary preparative for understanding moral, as well as natural, truths.

Our Lord, accordingly, has here drawn four different characters: in three of which, for the reasons he assigns, all instruction would as probably be lost, as Seed that is put into ordinary barren ground : while, in the fourth, like the same Seed sown on a fertile soil, it would infallibly spring up, and produce the fruits of a godly life.

I shall illustrate this Parable, and apply it to ourselves ; I. By considering the qualities of the persons described in it, and endeavoring to say what may guard you against

against their faults, and strongly recommend their virtues. II. By drawing one or two useful inferences, which the parable itself seems to suggest.

I. The first set of men at whom it is levelled, are represented by the Seed that fell on the way-side, and was soon picked up by the neighbouring birds: "When he sowed, some Seeds fell by the way-side; and the fowls came, and devoured them." --- These are people, who sometimes hear, perhaps sometimes read, the word of God. But then they presently throw it aside. They bestow no pains, to examine what it teaches; and have no resolution, to fulfil what it enjoins. Therefore they "bear no fruit" --- They make no advancement in the knowledge, but especially in the practice, of Religion.

These dissipated creatures (whose number, I fear, is by no means small) are neglecting their own essential good; and trifling with an affair of the last consequence. Christianity is a matter of such consequence, that upon the care we take to understand it, and the regard we pay to the duties it prescribes, we have infinitely more depending, than upon all things else in the world, put together.

All that we know, certainly, about a future state, or our eternal condition hereafter, is what Christ in his Gospel has revealed concerning it. And the only way by which we can be happy in that state, is the leading such a life, the conforming to such rules of behavior, as he has appointed us.

It is therefore our highest wisdom, and should be the ultimate object of all our present pursuits, to secure an interest in that future world; to "Lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold of eternal life." Which is an obligation so evident, as well as important, that you can scarce find a man, I mean a Christian, living (whatever be his practice) who does not clearly see it, and will not readily confess it.

Yet this fatal negligence was too frequent, even among the earliest Christians. St. James knew many such superficial hearers, whom he earnestly warns of their danger. "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only; deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer; he is like unto a man, beholding his natural face in a glass: Who beholdeth himself,

“ himself, and goeth his way, and straight  
 “ forgetteth what manner of man he was.  
 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of  
 liberty” (he that diligently examines into  
 the generous precepts of the Gospel) “ and  
 “ continueth therein” (makes them the  
 standing rule of his conduct) “ He being  
 “ not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the  
 “ work, this man shall be blessed in his  
 “ deed.”

2. The next set of people, described by  
 the Seed that fell on Stony Places, are they,  
 who, as our Savior explains it, “ Hear the  
 “ Word, and receive it with joy; but have  
 “ no root in themselves. For, when tribu-  
 “ lation or persecution ariseth, because of the  
 “ Word; by and by they are offended.”  
 That is, they are men who adhere pretty  
 firmly to their Religion, as long as it is at-  
 tended with easy circumstances. But, if  
 once they be called upon to suffer for its  
 sake; they then (like plants that want root,  
 or are overcome with heat) quickly wither  
 away, and fall from the faith.

These are scenes of distress, unknown to us,  
 at present: We are blest with a free enjoy-  
 ment of our religious principles: And I pray



God, we always may! For the hardships that many Christians have undergone, from the rage of Infidels on one side, and of hot-headed Bigots on the other, are perhaps the severest trials, to which human nature can be exposed. The persons therefore, now under consideration, may probably appear the most pardonable of any, who deny their Master, or desert his cause.

It is nevertheless certain, that our Lord requires us, not only inwardly to believe, but openly to avow, strenuously to defend, the great truths of his Gospel. And if you recollect the persecuted state of Christianity, during the early times; you will plainly see that, without the most unshaken resolution in its first professors, it could have been of very short duration, and must have perished in its infancy. Indeed those primitive Disciples discovered such a degree of pious fortitude, as seems to surpass the native strength of man; to have been raised and supported by the gracious influence of Almighty God.

The arguments with which the Scriptures encourage us to "Hold fast our Profession," when it happens to cross our present interest,

are

are such as these. That he, who suffers for the sake of his conscience and of the Christian Faith, has of all other men the highest reason to expect the Divine Favor. That, as this is the noblest proof of a sincere veneration for God and his laws, it shall accordingly entitle us to a future reward, with which nothing, that can at present befall us, will bear to be named. That we shall, by this means, most truly resemble our Heavenly Master; who was himself an example, not only of the purest goodness, but of the most undeserved sufferings: And that, if we are now partakers of his afflictions in the same righteous cause, we shall infallibly be hereafter partakers of his happiness.

These considerations operated, in their fullest force, upon the Apostles, and first Martyrs. "I reckon, says St. Paul, " That " the sufferings of this present time, are not " worthy to be compared with the glory, " which shall be revealed in us." So, again: " Our light affliction, which is but for a " moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. " While we look not at the things which are " seen, but at the things which are not seen.

didw

“ For the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.” The most cruel indignities a good Christian can undergo in this life, will presently cease; but the blessings reserved for his recompence in the next, will know no end.

3. The third class of men, which the Parable likens to the Seed that fell among Thorns, and was smothered by them, are they; who, as our Lord tells us, “ Hear the Word: But the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word; so that it becometh unfruitful.” That is, they are men, in whom religion is over-powered, and suppressed; either by the false pleasures, or by what is as falsely called the business, of life.

This species of Irreligion is extensive, beyond any. The far major part of the immoralities so prevalent amongst us, will be found to arise from one of these two causes. From a passionate love of pleasure, proceed the vices of intemperance and extravagance; which hurt a man's person, and ruin his family. From an immoderate love of the world, come injustice, falsehood, oppression, which

which injure the community. The two together, form a completely irreligious character, a total unconcern about our eternal welfare.

Hence it is, that Christ so warmly cautions us against both these excesses. They are incompatible with the duties we owe, to our Maker, our neighbour, ourselves. "No man can serve opposite masters: Ye cannot serve God, and Mammon." Your affections cannot be fixed, at the same point of time, upon objects, not only widely distant, but impossible to be brought together. No man can be fit for the conversation of Heaven, who devotes his whole soul to earthly projects; who never lifts his heart, never raises his views or his wishes, above the low arts and traffick of the world.

It is evident however, that the Gospel in no wise forbids a proper attention to any necessary business of the present life; to such business, I mean, as the nature of society, our condition here, our mutual dependence, plainly require. Nor are riches either deceitful, or sinful, if we do not suffer them to become so. They afford matter, for the exercise of the noblest virtues. They



give us numberless opportunities of serving each other, which could not be had without them; and of cultivating in ourselves that benevolent spirit, which is the qualification for our future felicity.

St. Paul therefore perpetually commands his converts to "Labor, working with their own hands; that they might have to give to persons in need." He proposes himself to them, as a pattern of industry in his own occupation. He charges them, from his own example, not to forsake any honest employment in which they had been brought up, on account of their commencing Christians; not to imagine, that Christianity interfered with any useful business, in which they were engaged; or was at all intended to alter, much less to destroy, any obligations of civil society.

What Christ then requires of you, respecting all worldly things, is singly this; that you proportion your concern for them, to their real value; that you guard against such an unreasonable anxiety about them, as will render you unworthy even of the present life, and utterly unprepared for the eternal state you are shortly to enter upon; that, in  
fine,

fine, you "Use this world so, as not to  
 "abuse it; since the fashion of this world,  
 "all its vanities, all its grandeur, will  
 "quickly pass away; but he, that doeth  
 "the will of God, abideth for ever."

What a blessing would it be, if men would  
 observe this divine caution! If they would  
 "make to themselves friends of the Mam-  
 "mon of Unrighteousness," by applying it  
 to the purposes for which it was given. If  
 they would look upon it, as the means of re-  
 ligious virtue; as the instrument of doing  
 good, in various ways, to our Fellow-crea-  
 tures; as a charge of great trust, which the  
 All-wise Providence has put into our hands;  
 agreeably to our improvement or misuse of  
 which, we shall be universally and impar-  
 tially dealt with.

The considering our worldly possessions  
 in this Christian light, and the acting ac-  
 cordingly, would prevent unnumbered evils  
 that daily flow from the contrary practice,  
 and make us happy in the prospect of being  
 amply rewarded for our faithful Steward-  
 ship.

4. The fourth sort of men, represented  
 by the Seed that fell on Good Ground, are  
 they;

they ; who, as it is here explained, " Hear  
 " the Word, and understand it ; who  
 " also bear fruit ; and bring forth, some an  
 " hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty :"  
 Or, as we read in the parallel place of St.  
 Luke, " Who, in an honest heart, having  
 " heard the word, keep it, and bring forth  
 " fruit with patience."

I beg you will remark, how comprehensively these Words of St. Luke define a truly pious man.---He does not barely see the Evidences of the Gospel, or the obligations of his duty ; but he testifies his conviction, by carrying his knowledge into due execution. His Religion consists, not in refined notions of morality, not in nice points of speculative divinity, not in a strict attention to public forms of devotion ; but in these principles realized, by a life of steady virtue. He is patient under affliction, unterrified by persecution, and firm against temptation. He punctually discharges the offices of his own station, and by his example animates as well as instructs others to do the same.

All this is implied in what is here called, by an expressive figure, " Bringing forth  
 " Fruit : " Which signifies the production  
 of

of those virtues in us, that, like the fruit of a tree, are the most valuable offspring of Religion. Thus, in another place, under the emblem of a Fruitless Tree, fit only to be cut down and burnt, is set forth the perdition ordained for worthless men; who, being barren of every thing good, are proper objects of Divine displeasure. So our Lord tells his followers, concerning certain false teachers, "That they would be known by "their" (noxious) "Fruits"---would discover their evil principles, and prove themselves Impostors, by their wicked practices.

Remember therefore, that you here learn, from your Savior's own lips, what kind of men they are, whom he acknowledges as his genuine Disciples, in whom his Gospel produces its genuine Fruits. They are men, that do honor to the Christian Name, to the whole Human Nature. They are not like those, who "Leave no memorial "behind them, and perish as if they never "had been;" but they consider the purposes for which they were made, and endeavor to answer them.

The



The Benefits society receives from such men, incontestably prove the utility of true Religion. And there is nothing that sets Christianity in so fine a light, as the actions of a sincere Christian. By these you see intuitively, what was its original design—to promote every thing, that is amiable, or commendable; to establish in the world, universal peace, harmony, and good-will.

Let us then, Brethren, conscientiously copy these excellent models: Let it be our grand aim and ambition, to deserve the same character. A life so spent, will appear at last, to be our highest wisdom. No other conduct can possibly afford a man real contentment; because there is no other, which he can review or reflect upon with inward satisfaction. A good conscience will be your everlasting comfort, when you shall have outlived the relish of every earthly enjoyment; when the only pleasure you can receive, is the hope, that “You shall die the Death of the Righteous, and that your last end will be like His.”

Having gone through the principal heads of discourse upon this Parable, let me, II,

add

add an inference or two, which the Parable itself naturally suggests.

1. You may observe an important doctrine, clearly conveyed under it, that The returns of obedience, which God requires from any man, are proportioned to the means the man has of learning his will, and the opportunities he has of fulfilling it.

This is signified in the last part of the Parable, by the several degrees of Fruitfulness in the Good Ground: Some of which (though it was all fruitful) brought forth an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty: Representing the various progress, which the Good Men, who embrace the Gospel, are expected to make in its virtues, according to their different abilities and circumstances.

The same doctrine is taught, in the Parable of the Rich Man, who delivered, to different servants, different sums of money, as each was able to employ and improve what was intrusted with him. --- It is also repeated by our Lord, in the following Words: "Un-  
"to whomsoever much is given, of him shall  
"much be required: And to whom Men  
"have

“have committed much, of him they will  
“ask the more.” As if he had said:  
“From them who are blest with the clearest  
“sense of duty, and with the most frequent  
“occasions of putting it in practice; from  
“them will be expected, by the universal  
“rule of even Human Justice, the most ex-  
“act and diligent service.”

Here then let us reflect on this equity of  
God’s dealing, with all conditions of men!  
and how infinitely it concerns those, who  
wish for his favor, to “Grow in Grace;”  
to “Go on toward Perfection;” not to  
bury their talents in the earth, or to squan-  
der them in vice; for which they must re-  
ceive the severer sentence, from the mouth  
of the righteous Judge! Moreover, what  
encouragement is here for persons of the  
lowest accomplishments, to exert their ut-  
most endeavors; when you know that  
those endeavors will be graciously accepted,  
if they do but come from a willing mind,  
and an honest intention. Whereas, if these  
are wanting; the brightest gifts that nature  
can bestow, however apt to dazzle the eyes,  
or raise the admiration, of thoughtless men,  
will aggravate our crimes, and make us the  
more

more guilty, in the sight of God. As they will demonstrate our Sins to be the Fruit, not of inevitable Ignorance, or pardonable Error, but of a corrupt heart, and malicious wickedness.

"A sharp Judgment," says the book of Wisdom, "shall be to them that are in high places. For Mercy will soon pardon the mean man: But mighty men shall be mightily tormented. He that is Lord over all, feareth no man's person, nor standeth in awe of any man's greatness. He created small and great, and careth for both alike."

2. This Parable, by shewing that Irreligion, and Infidelity, proceed from ourselves, shews at the same time, that they are no objection to the truth of the Gospel. For as the best Seed must fail, if sown upon a bad soil; so will the best instruction be lost upon those, who either do not hearken to it at first, or pay no regard to it afterwards. And though Christianity enforces the plainest rules, by the strongest arguments; yet what influence they will have over human actions, cannot but depend on the dispositions of the persons, to whom they



they are delivered. — Again. Though the duties our Savior enjoins, are universally approved; yet whether we will be directed by Judgment and Conscience, or by Humor and Passion, must be left entirely to our own free choice. And as it is no objection to the dictates of reason, that so few of us, comparatively, behave like rational creatures; nor to the laws of civil government, that they are every day broken by lawless men; so it would be infinitely unfair, to pass sentence upon the Gospel, from the manners of the people, commonly stiled Christians: Many of whom have no other concern with Christianity, than in dishonoring and abusing the Sacred Name, by which they are called.

The good Fruits, however, which Revelation has all along produced among men, are probably more considerable, than may at first be imagined. For there are sundry persons, unheeded by the gay and busy world, who have a constant sense of God upon their minds, with a firm belief in his Word and promises; which make them live, in all essential points, as becomes a Christian. And beside these, there are many others, who,

who, if not properly virtuous, are often restrained from vice, are made much better than they otherwise would be, by a secret dread of those future punishments, which the Gospel has denounced against Sinners.

In fine. Christianity has given men far nobler sentiments of the Deity, far juster notions of morality, than they ever had before it, or were ever likely to have without it: And therefore has done all that could be done, for establishing amongst us true piety to our Maker, as well as true humanity to each other.

But though this, with abundantly more, might be urged in its behalf; yet the best answer we can return to them who object against Christianity from the conduct of its professors, is to "Forfake our Sins, to amend our ways." And then, Facts will speak, in defence of both; will wipe away all the reproach that has been cast, either upon our Religion, or ourselves.

To the King Eternal.

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 tainted from vice, are much more  
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 "amend our ways." And then, I shall  
 speak in defence of him, who will wipe away  
 all the reproach that has been cast, either  
 upon our Religion, or ourselves, by  
 men who are not true to the King of  
 Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and  
 the Father of the Fatherless, and the  
 Lord of the Lords.

## S E R M O N XVIII.

JAMES V. 16.

*And pray One for Another.*

\* **T**HOUGH, from considering the passage to which the Text belongs, I allow that Prayer in this place more immediately signifies the extraordinary or inspired kind of Prayer, which was peculiar to the primitive Christians; yet it is unquestionably a universal duty, extending to all ages of the Christian Church. And as the special promise of the happy effects of inspired Prayer, gave such encouragement to the use of that, in those times; so does the general promise of a Blessing upon our ordinary devotions in behalf of each other, and the Di-



vine though not Miraculous Benefits accruing from the exercise of them, make it still an essential article of worship, to pray One for Another.

That every man should address himself to God, on his own account; should acknowledge his own wants and infirmities, his submission to the will, his reliance on the goodness, of the Supreme Being; is a truth, which arises from the very ideas, of a rational dependent Creature, of a Sovereign Creator and Governor over him. And that he should do the same office for his neighbour, if not so directly evident, will yet be seen to flow from our Relation to each other, as fellow-creatures and fellow-servants of one All-ruling Providence.---In order to set which point in the clearest light,

I. I will consider the subject, and the matter, of this branch of our Prayers.

II. I will shew you, why Praying for others, as well as for ourselves, is certainly a religious and Christian duty.

III. I shall conclude, with a few practical reflections; as the result of the whole.

I. Then Reason alone would tell you, but the Gospel assures you, that the subject  
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of a good man's Prayer, is the human race at large; that it is not limited to a little circle of private connections, but, like the Fountain of Good to whom it is presented, generously diffuses itself to all, without respect of persons. For if we are to wish well, and as far as possible to do service, to all men; we are bound, in like manner, to pray for all men. The argument is precisely the same, in both instances. Both are equally parts, of the same general Benevolence.

Indeed some attachments of kindred or friendship, some eminent worth or virtue, may justly raise our petitions for one man above another: But there is an important share of them still due, to all that are allied to us, by the common ties of nature :---To Foreigners, as well as Countrymen; to Infidels, as well as Believers; to the wicked themselves, no less than the righteous; nay, even to the enemy, along with the benefactor. Every man, in short, that can receive the Blessings of Heaven (every creature, I was going to say, that has a Being to enjoy) is qualified to be the subject of a Christian's Prayer. It is this unbounded humanity (called, in the New Testament, Charity) which characterizes

our Savior's doctrine; which gives it so visible a preference, to all the schemes of morality, that are known to have existed in the world before.

St. John, however, in his first epistle, makes one exception to this command of Praying for each other: Namely, the case of those, who "Had sinned the Sin, which is unto Death." Now for such Persons, he tells his Disciples, they were under no obligation to pray. "If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto Death; he shall ask" (of God) "and he shall give him life for them, that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say, that he shall pray for it"---for the person guilty of it, or for the cure of the distemper it was punished with; which distemper, being mortal, was consequently incurable.

The Sin St. John here points at, is generally taken to have been the falling-away from the profession of Christianity, from all the evidences and advantages of the Gospel, to Heathen Idolatry: So as to turn a persecutor of that Religion, about the truth whereof men might be so fully satisfied, in those miraculous ages. Which high transgression,

gression, is supposed to have been visited, for a warning to others, with some irrecoverable sickness; and thence to be stiled "A Sin unto Death," or "A Sin punished with Death."

But this is not the case with us, of the present day. And as we have reason to hope, that no man, who will repent, is finally unpardonable with God; or, at least, are very incompetent Judges, when he is so; it is impossible for us, to pronounce any one exempt from the charity of our Prayers.

Concerning the Matter of our Petitions for other Men, that also is to be as large, as the subject of them.---Blessings are either earthly, or Heavenly; either temporal, or eternal. And as all men are capable, and ought to be desirous, of both; our intercession with God must include every branch of them, which we judge to be suitable to the condition, or the necessities, of the several sorts of Persons. Thus, for the rich and great, we must request an heart of wisdom and liberality, equal to their power of doing good: For the poor and afflicted, patience under their sufferings, and deliverance from them: For the Heathen, or the Infidel, the



knowledge of God's laws; the Grace of an humble, teachable, spirit: For the wicked and our enemies, repentance and conversion: For the virtuous and our friends, the reward of their kindneses, both in this life, and in that which is to come: For princes and nations, public prosperity: Finally, for every individual, what either we ourselves believe, or Providence shall see, is most expedient for him.

Having thus considered the objects, and the extent, of this article of Prayer; let me, II, inquire into the reasons, upon which it is founded.

To rejoice at the welfare of others, is a pleasure inseparable from us, as social creatures. It is a disposition, strictly connected with the love (I mean with the rational love) of ourselves. To let all your views terminate in your own personal concerns, without the least eye or attention to the good of those about you; is inhuman, as well as unchristian, in the highest degree. Nay, I will add, that, as the love of our brethren is the only ingenuous motive to every kind office we can do them; so a total indifference

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to whatever may befall them, is an indirect violation of every social duty.

Now, among all the instances of a benevolent heart; prayer to God, for his mercies and favors, is the most generous. For who can be such a friend, as the man that seeks our interest with the Author of all good? What kindness is there, here below; that can compare with the Blessings, which come from him? What affection is so likely to be sincere, as that which is professed in the most solemn act of devotion? Many other more popular marks of friendship, ultimately proceed from some selfish view, that almost utterly destroys their value: Whereas this can be conceived to arise from nothing, but an unfeigned regard to our neighbour's happiness.

Again. How natural is it for one, who bears the smallest good-will to his brethren, to address himself, in their behalf, to the common Father of us All! If you have a grain of charity, or of piety, in you; how can you implore the Divine Goodness for yourself, without expressing some concern for those, whose wants and infirmities are the same as your own?

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If then to love mankind, be the part of a man; this, which is the noblest specimen of that love, must not, surely, be omitted. If to wish, and to promote, their happiness, be a precept of morality; to beg for them the Grace and Assistance of God, must certainly be a duty of Religion.

Further yet. As Prayer for each other, bespeaks a general good turn of mind; so is it a proof of one signal virtue, 'The forgiveness of injuries.'---The present state of human things, is so unequal, often so confused; that, both in our tempers and our affairs, there will be many clashings, many interferences, between us. "It is impossible," in this respect, "but that offences will come." Nothing therefore is more necessary for our mutual peace, than to put a candid construction upon our neighbor's imperfections. Nothing more clearly indicates a liberal soul, nothing is more religiously enjoined by the Gospel, than a readiness to pardon those failings, which will for ever be found among such creatures as we are.

Now to intercede with God in behalf of the persons who have used you ill, is the highest

highest possible evidence of this Heavenly temper. He who can entreat the Great Judge of the world, to have mercy upon his enemy ; has doubtless laid aside all thoughts of revenge, and cordially forgives him. Hence it is that our Savior commands us, in a special manner, to bless them, that curse us ; to pray for the very men, who hate, who persecute us. And while he himself was suffering the most cruel indignities, from the wicked hands of the Jews ; you remember how he breaks out into this divine prayer ; " Father, " forgive them : They know not what they " do."

Lastly. The excellence of the duty before us, will completely appear, from its manifest tendency to quicken the sense of our obligations to all other instances of brotherly love.---When you consider, that you are bound to intercede with God, for all men ; how obvious will be the conclusion, respecting every inferior duty !---When you reflect what it is, to beg a blessing upon every man ; how strongly will that reflection remind you, that you must do injury to none ! While you are calling down the Divine Bounty upon the distresses of your neighbor ;



bor; how can you suffer your own bowels of compassion to be shut up against him!-- When you recollect the requests you are to make, that God would forgive your enemies; what an argument is this to engage you, to forgive them yourself!--How is it possible to petition the favors of Heaven, for a generous friend; without thinking on the gratitude due from every other part of your behavior towards him!--Finally. When you are praying for the reformation and conversion of sinful men; can you avoid perceiving, what a tie there is upon us all; to be diligent in this good, this important, work; by our advice and example; by exhorting and instructing, by rebuking and admonishing, those that err!

Thus you see, that "To pray one for another," as we are ordered in the text, has an admirable effect upon the mind. It refines our whole temper, and gives us the true Christian Spirit. It opens the way, to every moral virtue; leads us to the practice of every species of Benevolence. It is therefore not only a scriptural, but a most rational, precept; built upon the two-fold con-  
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nection we have with each other, as Christians, and as men.

I come now, III, to make a few remarks, that will be the proper application of what has passed upon the subject.

And, I. Let me observe the mistake of those people, who, from not understanding the Apostle's command, are apt to raise the following objection to it---'Whatever the petitions of men may be, we cannot imagine, that God will alter his intended proceedings. His dealings with mankind, are the eternal rules of Righteousness. What therefore can our Prayers signify; since all men will be treated according to these Sacred Rules, whether we pray for them, or no.'---But surely, if I need not pray for other people, because they will be rewarded or punished according to wise and stated laws, notwithstanding my Prayers; then neither need I pray for myself: For in the same manner shall I likewise be dealt with. So that these objectors would destroy the necessity of all kinds of Prayer; would make all Devotion, private as well as public, a matter of no consequence: Though it is plainly a  
most

most essential part of Religion in general, of Christianity in particular.

Certainly, however the designs of Providence are conducted; a duty resulting, as we have seen this does, from the relations you bear to your Maker and your neighbor, is not a bit the less valid. Besides, though the rule of the Divine Dispensations may be fixed, in the main,; yet we should reasonably suppose, that the wisdom of God is not tied down to one formal method of bringing them to pass. The course of things is not so invariably fixed, but that he always reserves to himself a power of interposing; and of conveying a thousand Blessings to mankind, the footsteps of which are invisible to us.

Whatever, then, the benefit of our Prayers may, or may not appear, to the man who intercedes for his neighbor; his obligation is the same: and, though the event should be submitted to God; the duty still is our's.

The sum is this: When Prayer, either for ourselves or others, is offered up with that humility and good disposition of mind, which ought ever to attend it; so pious, so becoming

becoming an office, is then performed ; that God undoubtedly approves the Prayer, though he may not grant it : It is equally acceptable to him, whether he does, or for wise reasons does not answer it, in the exact manner which we may desire.

2. Hence you will be guarded against a second mistake, respecting the persons, for whom we are supposed to pray. ' Let us, say these Cavillers, petition of God whatever we please, for other men ; it cannot affect their principles. According to those principles, they act : and according to their actions, will the Almighty consider them, for good, or for evil. Our Prayers for others, cannot be conceived to alter their behavior : And this is the rule, by which all men are to be judged : agreeably to this, not to our requests, will they be rewarded, or punished.'

The reply is easy !---Though some men may neither deserve this instance of our love, nor be profited by it ; that is no warrant for us, to suspend the exercise of it. Is not the goodness of Heaven itself, too often shed abroad, among the unthankful, and the unworthy ? We are to pray for others, not  
barely



barely upon their account, but upon our own also: Not only because it may do them service; but because it is, in its very nature, a religious act of charity. As for the success of our petitions, this must be left to the good-pleasure of God; who best knows, when they should be admitted, when rejected. And if they happen not to be complied with; it is possibly owing to the ill conduct of the men, who have rendered themselves improper objects of the Divine Favor. But be this as it may, we have done our part; and have discharged a duty, which was incumbent upon us. We have given a proof, of affection for our neighbor, of faith in God: And nothing more can be expected from us,---To say the whole, at once: Whatever effect our praying for others, may have upon them, it has an excellent one upon ourselves: If it does not make them better, it tends to make us a great deal so.

3. From what has been advanced, you will clearly see the reason why St. Paul commands, that "Prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for All Men;" as also why, in the form of worship appointed to be used in our own Church, the whole

whole service consists of Prayers for an unlimited variety of persons: for the King, and all Civil Magistrates under him: For our Ecclesiastical Rulers, and all who are intrusted with the care of our Religion: For all our Fellow-subjects, the People of this land: For all our Christian Brethren, throughout the world: For all the Sons of Men, of whatever nation, principles, or profession; whether Infidels or Believers, whether Adversaries or Friends.

The Reason, I say, of this, will be visible, from the maxim, already laid down; that Prayer, as a branch of Christian Benevolence, knows no bounds: So that we must not confine our requests to ourselves, or to a few select favorites; but must extend them to all, who stand in need of the Divine Mercy, or Bounty. Every form of Prayer therefore is materially defective, unless it comprehends, for its subject, our whole species: Beginning with ourselves, and those that are nearest to us; then descending to the lower connections, of kindred, or friendship; and at last including all, who partake of the same common nature.

4. From the explanation given of the text, you will discern a double motive, for your attendance on the public service of God: namely, that 'Praying for each other, is not only declaring, in the most respectful manner, the sense you have of your subjection to Him; but is, moreover, an instance of the highest regard for Mankind.' It is a social virtue: And he that wilfully absents himself from every place of worship, betrays, not only a profane contempt of his Maker, but an inhuman unconcern about the happiness of his fellow-creatures. He offends against man, as well as against God; against the whole world---who all claim to share in his devotions, have all a right to his Prayers. And though I should allow, that nobody directly loses any thing, for want of 'his Prayers;' yet this will be found, from what has been said above, not at all to justify his neglect of his duty. That neglect corrupts the man himself: and the bad example of it, corrupts the people around him.

5. Hence let us learn, 'what a value we ought to set upon truly religious persons.' Since it is evident, that whoever is sincere

sincere in his devotion, and prays like a Christian, may well be considered as a general Benefactor. We are all beholden to him, for the most disinterested expression of Goodwill. And while he will be certain to receive every mark of esteem, from virtuous men; it is impossible, surely, for vice herself to look upon him, without some degree of veneration!

6. Let me conclude, with entreating you to reflect, on the Heavenly nature of that Religion; by which we are taught, to be thus tenderly affected towards each other! How happy would the world be, were we to cultivate these generous principles in our hearts, and to call them forth into action! How infinitely better would they be for us, than falsehood, envy, slander, oppression; sins, that are so destructive of all peace, whether public or private.---Such sins, therefore, let us for ever renounce; and "follow after the "Righteousness," which the Gospel enjoins; which can be productive of nothing but good to all orders of men, either in this life or the next.

To God, only wise.



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 next. And thus, my dear friends, I leave you  
 to God, only, with  
 Adieu.

# S E R M O N XIX.

LUKE xix. 8.

*Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor: And if I have taken any Thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him Four-fold.*

\* **T**HERE are these two properties of the Christian Religion, which will for ever recommend it to all judicious men. First, that its Blessings are of the most sublime nature. Secondly, that the means appointed for attaining these Blessings, are the most reasonable, and effectual.

The Blessings proposed in this dispensation, are; the pardon of our past sins; the unspeakable comfort arising from the assurance of this pardon, in the present life; the promise of a future life, that will be far more happy, and will never end.

The condition upon which these Blessings are offered to us, is repentance---A change of our tempers; a reformation from vice, and vicious practices, to the love of virtue, and the observance of her laws.

This condition is no less wise and just, than the reward is noble and invaluable. No other means could possibly have secured that most desirable of all objects, our eternal Salvation. Since nothing can qualify us for the joys of Heaven, but a life of Righteousness: And without Holiness, no man can be admitted into the presence of his Maker, or be fit for the conversation of Angels.

No wonder therefore, that the leading article in the Christian Covenant, should be "Repentance towards God;" that this should be the subject of John the Baptist's preaching, who was the forerunner of Christ, and laid the foundation of his kingdom; that it should be the first lesson our Lord himself,

himself, and his Apostles, read to the world; the vow made for us, at our infant-baptism; the solemn and public declaration of every new Disciple.---Which is remarkably specified, in the behaviour of Zaccheus; at his first acquaintance with Christ, and on his first assuming the title of a Christian. "Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor: And if I have taken any thing from any man, by false accusation; I restore him four-fold."

My method of treating these words, shall be;

I. To consider the particular circumstances of the person who spoke them, at and before his Conversion.

II. To draw from these, a few useful articles of reflection.

I. One most notable circumstance, relative to this Zaccheus, is his office, or employment. He was a Publican; that is, a collector of the Jewish taxes, for the Roman Emperor; to whom Judea had long been tributary.---In the remoter ages of the Roman state, this was accounted a post of considerable honour; and was wont to be conferred upon men of the best quality. For it

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was an office of important trust: And the Persons employed in it, by justice to the subject as well as fidelity to the government, could not fail of appearing in a respectable light. But afterwards, in more corrupt times, and in the distant provinces of that vast dominion, these Publicans fell into almost universal disrepute. For, instead of fairly collecting the revenue for the Emperor; they hired, or farmed it, at a certain rent; and so made what overplus they could, for themselves: Which, you will readily imagine, was effected, by unnumbered instances of oppression. They pretended to act with full authority, from the Prince; under the sanction of whose name, they threatened and terrified men into what payments they pleased. It was dangerous to refuse, or even to complain; for fear of being falsely accused by these devouring officers, as disaffected to the government, as enemies to Cesar. Thus they heaped up estates, by plundering their fellow-subjects: Not, you may be sure, without ample returns of detestation and contempt.

But there was no nation in the whole empire, that had a more invincible antipathy against

against this order of men, than the Jews. Who valued themselves, as the chosen, the peculiar, people of God: Would own no master, but Him: and laid so much stress upon their liberty, that the smallest infringement of this, by the introduction or acknowledgment of any foreign power, was looked upon with the utmost abhorrence. Beside which, the extorsions of these Tax-gatherers had so enraged them, had given them such an aversion to the very name, that they held a Publican upon a level with Heathens, Harlots, and the worst of Sinners.

This account, brief as it is, will enable you to see the meaning of several passages in the chapter before us, concerning this Zaccheus. In the second verse, he is called "the chief among the Publicans." One perhaps, that had sundry petty officers, or collectors, under him. It is also said, that he was very rich. And his riches, from his own confession, were raised, in great part at least, by false accusation--by compelling men to pay exorbitant taxes, under pain of being charged with rebellion against Tiberius Cesar, the vilest tyrant that ever existed.

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II. These particulars are sufficient to render this man's conversion, highly worth our notice. And there seem naturally to arise from it, the following interesting reflections.

I. It demonstrates the peculiar force of conviction, which accompanied our blessed Master's doctrine.

That a Publican, hardened in iniquitous practices, should, on his first hearing this doctrine, melt into perfect humanity; that so much ill-gotten wealth should be freely exchanged for a good conscience; that every worldly passion should at once give way to the fear of God;---This, I say, shews there must have been the most striking evidence in what our Saviour taught, to work so immediate, as well as complete a reformation, in this eminent Profelyte.

Scarce any thing, generally speaking, is more difficult, than the conversion of very wicked persons, to a life of piety. The Scriptures of the New Testament, call it "Regeneration," and a "New Birth." They compare it, to even a "Resurrection from the Dead;" to changes, very rare and

and improbable, in the ordinary process of nature. Our Lord's preaching therefore, that it might make the stronger impression upon the minds of his hearers, beside the authority with which it was delivered, had Miracles likewise to support it; and was all the while recommended, by his own most pure, most bright, example.

2. The instance of the Convert now before us, presents to our thoughts, the universal utility of the Christian Institution. It shews us, what an admirable alteration the Gospel produces in men, when they heartily embrace it, and duly attend to it; how admirably it is calculated to establish amongst us that mutual justice and compassion, which alone can render us tolerably happy, or preserve us from perpetual scenes of confusion and misery.

These amiable fruits manifestly appeared, not in Zaccheus only, but in many other of the early Converts to Christianity: Who faithfully retained this noble spirit of their Religion, after their Savior, and all his Apostles, had left the world. Those primitive Christians, when persecuted by Heathen Princes, openly appeared to them, in  
behalf



behalf of the Gospel, from the salutary effects it visibly wrought, on the manners of all who sincerely professed it. And thus much they could always truly alledge, in its defence; that it not barely was not injurious to the rights of society, or to the maxims of civil government; but, on the contrary, if duly regarded, would infallibly cause all governments, all societies, to prosper; As it indispensably required the practice of every virtue, that constitutes the character, either of a good Governor, or a good Subject.

Indeed not only are the laws which the Gospel prescribes for our actions, universally beneficial; but the encouragements, assistances, and promises, by which it enforces these laws, are excellent in proportion. It proclaims, not merely pardon, not merely a release from condemnation, but endless happiness, to sinful men, if they will repent, through the mediation and merits of Christ. At the same time, it vindicates the honour of the Supreme Lawgiver, by the dreadful punishments which it denounces, against all incorrigible wickedness. Thus it gives you the clearest idea of Divine

vine Justice, tempered with Divine Benevolence. Which is the sentiment, that all sound philosophy has ever taught men to entertain concerning the Deity; as the Lord and Father of mankind.

3. You may further observe, from the Conversion of this Publican; that upon true repentance, no man, whatever be his situation or calling, or however flagrant his offences, is excluded from forgiveness under the Gospel. --- Nothing but their ignorant self-love, and self-conceit, misled the Jews into that narrow-minded notion, that An Heathen, or a Jew, turned Publican, could have no part in the Kingdom of their Messiah. The Christian Covenant was never meant to be shut up within such contracted bounds. It was not a man's birth or profession, but his honest mind and his penitent heart, which Christ regarded. The fewer external advantages the man possessed, the more highly did our Lord esteem his virtues, and his generous resolution to subdue his vices. The stronger temptations his condition exposed him to; the more joyfully might he avail himself of the gracious purpose, for which the Son of God

God came into the world: "I came not, to  
"call the Righteous; but Sinners, to Re-  
"pentance."

You should however be extremely cau-  
tious, not to mistake the sense of this ob-  
servation; that 'The most heinous Sins  
'are capable of Pardon.' For God's sake,  
let none of you be guilty of Zaccheus's  
Iniquities, because his were forgiven: But  
remember that, if your crimes are like his;  
your repentance too, if you hope to be par-  
doned, must be such as his was. Who,  
upon his first entrance into that Religion  
which condemned his former conversation,  
heartily resolves to amend, and begins di-  
rectly to execute it. He wastes no time in  
deliberating, whether he shall make his in-  
clinations submit to that conviction, to  
which his judgment had submitted already.  
He discovers no desire of living a while, to  
feast upon his ill-gotten wealth; and then  
commencing Christian. No! He imme-  
diately begins, by a change of his conduct,  
to prove the reality of his repentance. He  
immediately stands up: "Behold, Lord, the  
"half of my Goods I give to the Poor;  
"And if I have taken any thing from any  
"man,

“man, by false accusation; I restore him  
“four-fold”

Allowing therefore that there is, in this Profelyte, an instance of the forgiveness of enormous wickedness; yet is there not likewise, in the same person, an instance of repentance, upon the very first opportunity of Christian instruction? Are you not expressly told, that Zaccheus was a perfect stranger to Christ; that he had never heard, or seen, him before? In a word. The reformation of this offender, was fully adequate to his offences. Had it been otherwise, there is not the least authority for presuming that our Lord would have pronounced, “This day is Salvation come to this House.”

The remark then, that ‘There is no Sin, which the Gospel excludes from forgiveness;’ must always be understood, with a two-fold restriction: ‘Provided the reformation of it be speedy, as well as sincere.’ Whereas if, instead of an early and earnest return to your duty, you shift off repentance from day to day; till the few last actions of your life, are the only good ones  
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in it; your case will be totally unlike that of Zaccheus; and, you have every reason to fear, will be treated accordingly.

4thly. You are taught by the example of this Convert, that "No situation in life, no concern about worldly business, no pre-tended engagement in temporal affairs, can excuse any man's neglect of Spiritual Duties; or exempt him from the religious and moral obligations, which the Gospel lays upon us."

Could these excuses be pleaded, on behalf of any creature; they certainly might, on behalf of Zaccheus. Who was as deeply immersed in worldly matters, had as little leisure for pious meditation, as man can be conceived to have. Yet you do not find, that "Salvation came to his house;" till he had freed his mind from these low vanities, and had raised his affections to the things that are above.

The plain truth is--so far are worldly cares from being able to justify any negligence in the weightier concerns of Religion; that these very cares, whenever they exceed a certain limit, are evermore criminal.

nal. Our blessed Lord therefore, incessantly cautions us against them; and so do all his Apostles. Nor is a Christian, a real Christian, distinguished more, by any one character; than by a greater indifference to worldly pleasures, and worldly profits, than generally appears in other men.

And the reason is most obvious! For what is it, that makes us regardless of a future life; but an over-sord attachment to the present one? What is it, that alienates us from the love of God; but the love of the world? What else is the incentive, to all the secret knaveries, or open violences, we exercise upon each other?

Here then, the sons of avarice and oppression, can have no better instructor, can follow no safer guide, than the Publican now before us. Who, conscious that his love of money was the root of all the evils he had committed, and consequently the grand vice he had to reform, cries out, with the zeal of a true Penitent, "Behold, Lord, " the half of my Goods I give to the Poor, " And if I have taken any thing from any " Man by false accusation, I restore him " Four-fold."

5thly. One very useful inference more may be drawn from the behaviour of the person mentioned in the text.---It particularly points out the meaning of the word Repentance, and what will be expected from every man, who undertakes to repent. It shews you, that the conditions are, not only sorrow for past sins; but, which is the infallible consequence of such sorrow if it be sincere, the forsaking them, and entering in to a quite contrary life. Zaccheus informs you, that Repentance is such a lively sense of a man's offences; as induces him to obey the laws of God, with a willing mind: That it cannot therefore be fulfilled, by any uneasiness for your former misconduct; without an actual alteration of your principles, as well as practices, in all time to come.

This you find strongly insisted upon by John the Baptist, the first preacher of Christian Repentance. "Bring forth therefore," says he to the hypocritical Pharisees, who placed Religion in any thing upon earth, sooner than in a virtuous life.---"Bring forth therefore Fruits, meet for Repentance; and think not that ye shall be saved."

"I have, because ye have Abraham to your Father."

In the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, St. Paul declares it was the whole business of his Apostleship, to teach mankind, that "they should turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance." You see then, that Repentance is not a mere abstinence from vice; does not terminate in a little negative, inactive, virtue; but is followed by Good Works; which are its faithful, its inseparable, attendants.

If, for example, you have injured your neighbour, by whatever unlawful measures; you must not content yourself with forbearing to injure him again; but must make him all possible satisfaction, for injuries past; nay must, moreover, do him, and all men, every kind office that is in your power.--- So you read that Zaccheus, not only, by "Restoring Four-fold," makes abundant amends for the extorsions he had committed; not only puts himself, as far as could be done, upon the same footing with the world, as if he had never been injurious; but super-adds such acts of liberality, as amount to even half his substance: "Behold, Lord,



"the half of my Goods I give to the Poor." In consequence of which, God accepted his Repentance, and "blotted out all his transgressions."

6. A short application of what has been said, to ourselves, shall conclude the subject.

If our Savior's doctrine wrought so effectual a conversion in this Publican, at first hearing; whence comes it to fail of working reformation in us, who hear it every day! If the Gospel could often, at the first proposal, correct the immoralities of Heathens and Jews; what a sad reflection is it that We, who have been educated in its Blessings, who have so long enjoyed its Heavenly instruction, are such children in its virtues, and live so little like Christians!

Let as many of us then, as have neglected these advantages, copy the excellent pattern, that is here set forth to us. Let us not continue in sin, till it will be too late to repent; but embrace the gracious offers of forgiveness, while they are within our reach; before they be finally withdrawn from us.

Let Zaccheus's wisdom teach us, not to forfeit the favor of God, for any infamous, short-lived

short-lived riches, of the present world; but freely to resign them all, for the glorious and eternal treasures of that which is to come.

Let our Repentance, like his, not consist in barely ceasing to do evil, or refraining from gross wickedness; not in a few vain tears, or enthusiastic lamentations; not in a presumptuous reliance on the Mercies of God, or the merits of Christ, without any honest endeavours of our own; but in generous affections, and generous actions, towards our Fellow-christians, towards all mankind.

This is the only behaviour, that can render our Repentance meritorious, or prove it to be sincere. It is this alone, that can make us worthy of a sentence similar to that, which our master pronounced upon the regenerate Publican: "Well done, thou faithful Penitent: This day is Salvation come unto thee: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

To whom, only wise.

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To whom, only will.

in most excellent manner, and by the

not scruple to frequent the Heathen feasts, and to eat of the meats, that had been offered in sacrifice to Heathen Idols. Which practice, though perhaps not criminal merely in itself, was nevertheless attended with

## SERMON XX.

inconvenience with their Christian profession, were displeased and offended at the persons concerned in it. --- Others, not yet convinced of the liberty which Christianity allowed them, but who were ready to follow their example, in

a matter, which their own weak consciences told them was unlawful. A third sort who

*Whatsoever ye do, do All to the Glory of God.*

**B**EFORE I apply this precept to ourselves, it will not be improper to mention the occasion, upon which St. Paul at first delivered it.

There were some dissensions and disagreements in the Corinthian Church, as we learn from the whole tenor of both his epistles. One, among other causes of which, as appears from this and the eighth chapter, was, that some of the Christian Converts, who had more courage than prudence, did



‘not scruple to frequent the Heathen feasts;  
 ‘and to eat of the meats, that had been of-  
 ‘fered in sacrifice to Heathen Idols.’ Which  
 practice, though perhaps not criminal merely  
 in itself, was nevertheless attended with  
 hurtful consequences.---Many, who thought  
 it inconsistent with their Christian profession,  
 were displeased and offended at the persons  
 concerned in it.---Others, not yet convinced  
 of the liberty which Christianity allowed  
 them in such indifferent matters, might pro-  
 bably be drawn to follow their example, in  
 a matter, which their own weak consciences  
 told them was unlawful.---A third sort, who  
 had not yet learnt that “an Idol was no-  
 “thing in the world,” might be ready to  
 conclude, ‘They were still permitted to  
 ‘worship the same Gods as before, pro-  
 ‘vided they did but worship the God of  
 ‘Israel.’

This custom therefore was of manifold  
 disservice to the Christian cause. It would  
 naturally create divisions, amongst them. It  
 would endanger some, who were timorous  
 and diffident, to act against their own per-  
 suasion. It would tend to give others a  
 false  
 4 X

false idea of the Gospel, and encourage them to continue in their ancient Idolatry.

The Apostle, accordingly, having pointed out these inconveniencies, and earnestly cautioned his Disciples against them; lays down the precept, which I have chosen for the text: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do; do all to the glory of God." That is, as you will clearly see by the following verse, "Do nothing which may prejudice, offend, or mislead the minds, of your fellow-christians, or of any men: But, throughout your whole conduct, shew a hearty zeal for the Worship of the one true God, for promoting peace among yourselves, and for advancing the credit of Christ's Religion."

This is the peculiar meaning of the words, as they stand in the chapter before us; and considering the subject, to which they immediately relate,---I shall however take them in a more general view, and endeavor to inform you, what is required of us in fact, what our practice and behaviour must be, in order that we may "act for the Glory of God," in all the capital senses of which the precept seems capable.

I, Then.

Then, In order to our acting for the honor of God, our prime care must be, 'to form worthy and becoming notions of him,' as far as he is known to us, either by the light of our own reason, or by the assistance of Divine Revelation. We must accordingly look upon him, as the Creator and Governor of the universe: Who originally produced it by his power, and still preserves it by his continual Providence: To whom man, and all things else owe their being, with all the properties that naturally belong to them.

We must consider Him further, as perfectly Benevolent; as uniformly consulting the welfare of the creatures he has made; foreseeing all their various wants; and using such methods to relieve them, as are directed by the highest Wisdom.

In particular, We must think of him, as infinitely superior to every thing, that implies weakness, or infirmity. We must ascribe to him nothing of imperfection; frailty, or suffering: Which are incident only to created spirits; and should be far removed from our conceptions of the Great Creator; who is completely happy, in himself;

self; utterly incapable of pain or disturbance, from any cause or event whatever.

The Scriptures, I confess, now and then speak of Almighty God; as if he were subject to something like the human passions. He is said to have repented, that he made man; to pity our sorrows, earnestly to desire our reformation; to be grieved and angry, at our wickedness. But these expressions must be taken, as merely adapted to our apprehensions of things, and to the common forms of human language; for the sake of representing to us, in a more familiar way, the designs or actions of the Supreme Being. And the true interpretation of such expressions, is certainly this; that what men might reasonably do, when they are incited by compassion, grief, or anger; That does God; or something like it; but yet in a manner, unspeakably more perfect; and without any of the emotions, or uneasy feelings, of which we are sensible.

Lastly. To complete your idea of Almighty God, you must consider him as a Being of the strictest Holiness, and most impartial justice. Who is of pure eyes, "than to behold Iniquity:" who cannot  
"Grace of Prayer, or Divine" possibly

Which



“possibly either do himself, or approve in another, any thing that is wrong, or intentionally evil; and has a peculiar regard to the moral conduct of his rational creatures. — You must conceive him, in short, to be a great and good master; who “is no respecter of Persons;” is the “Rewarder of all them, that diligently seek him;” and the Punisher of all, without distinction, that profanely forsake him.

Such sentiments as these concerning the Supreme Being, are not only the foundation of all sound Religion; but are especially a part of the duty prescribed in the text. The same Apostle therefore tells us in his epistle to the Romans, that the Heathen world, who might clearly have seen the perfections of God in his works of Creation and Providence, “Glorified him not as God; but changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man; to birds, and beasts, and creeping things.” That is, they dishonored him, by the vain and vile imaginations they entertained of him; by being wilfully and inexcusably ignorant of his Divine nature; which defiled their Religion,

gion, and consequently their whole manners; and sunk them into the most despicable of all Superstition, the worshipping dumb Idols, and even the lowest Brutes.

2. The next thing requisite for our discharge of the duty of "acting to the Glory of God," is; that we behave ourselves towards him, agreeably to the just sentiments, we have previously formed of him: Not barely considering him as a Being possessed of all perfections; but manifesting our sense of these perfections, by some proper outward expressions of reverence. Particularly, by making frequent acknowledgements of his power, wisdom, and goodness, in the Creation and Government of the world: By professing our confidence in him, our reliance upon him, our submission to his will and the dispensations of his Providence: By returning him thanks for all favors past, and requesting the continuance of them: By declaring him to be the giver of whatever we enjoy; and ourselves to be duly conscious of our dependence upon him, of our infinite obligations to him, for the numberless bounties he daily bestows on us.

The particulars now mentioned, are the substance of Prayer, or Divine Worship:  
Which

Which is therefore often represented in scripture, as another principal branch of the general duty I am here explaining. Infomuch, that the Phrase of "Glorifying God," or "Acting for his Glory," repeatedly signifies "A solemn acknowledgment of the Divine Perfections, by some external acts of devotion." All nations whom "thou hast made, shall come and worship thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy Name," says the Royal Psalmist. St. John, in his Revelation, describes the Saints above, as thus addressing and adoring the Deity: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, Honor, and Power: For thou hast created all things: And for thy pleasure they are, and were created." Our Savior, in like manner, tells us, that men act for the Glory of God, by testifying a grateful sense of his Blessings, and confessing him to be the author of them. So that when, of the ten Lepers who were cleansed, one only, who was a Samaritan, discovered any thankfulness for the signal mercy shewn to him; "There are not found," says our Lord, "that returned to give Glory to God, save this stranger."

But,

But, golly, we, most especially, "act for  
 "the Glory of God," by the practice of  
 moral virtue, or by keeping his moral com-  
 mandments: By fulfilling the several duties  
 to our neighbour and ourselves, which He  
 has enjoined us. By being just and gene-  
 rous, to each other; sober and temperate, in  
 our private characters. By promoting, in  
 our proper sphere, the common good. By  
 governing our passions; and refraining from  
 those vices, which are as hurtful to nature,  
 as they are repugnant to reason; which dis-  
 qualify us for the offices of social life;  
 making us, at the same time, useless to the  
 world, and wretched in ourselves.

Hence you find our Savior warning his  
 first Disciples, "Herein is my Father Glo-  
 "rified, that ye bring forth much Fruit."  
 This is the highest honor, which God can  
 receive from you, or which Ye can pay him;  
 that ye abound in good works; that your  
 actions be such, as become the professors of  
 my Religion; that ye prove yourselves to be  
 my Disciples, by following my example, and  
 obeying my precepts.

Hence likewise the confession of our sins,  
 with sincere humiliation and a just apprehen-

which

sion



sion of their guilt, is, in many places of scripture, stiled "Giving Glory to God." So Joshua says to Achan, who had stolen and secreted the forbidden spoils: "My son, give, I pray thee, Glory to the Lord God of Israel; and make confession unto him."

On the contrary, those men, who live in an open neglect of these important duties, are said, with peculiar emphasis, to dishonor God, the Supreme Law-giver. And St. Paul thus addresses himself to the confident Jew, who condemned, in a poor Heathen, the very vices he committed, and allowed in himself: "Thou, that boastest in the Law, by breaking the Law, dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed, through You, among the Gentiles."

And certainly, if you consider the thing, with the least attention; the strongest of all arguments against an immoral life, is this,--- That it is a dishonor to the Great Superior, in whom we live and move and have our being; a contempt of the power, which created, and preserves us; an affront to the goodness, which giveth us richly all things to enjoy. --- This argument is set in a most striking light, by the Prophet Malachi, where

where he represents Almighty God, as complaining thus, of the disobedience and ingratitude of his ancient people: "A son  
 "honoreth his father, and a servant his  
 "master. If then I be a Father, where is  
 "mine honor? And if I be a Master, where  
 "is my fear? Saith the Lord of Hosts."

4thly. I should by no means omit observing, that, in order to our acting for the Glory of God, our actions not only must be such as he has commanded, but they must be done likewise, out of a regard to him, or from a sense of duty towards him. We must not merely do what he requires, but we must do it upon a principle of gratitude, and a fear of offending him. Our motive in acting, must be the desire of his approbation; a pious hope of the rewards, which he has promised to them that honor him. Thus we shall truly perform the duty before us; and our expectation of the Divine Favor, will be rational, and well-grounded.

What I am now remarking, exactly corresponds with the Apostle's precept, in his epistle to the Colossians: Where, speaking to servants, he says: "Whatsoever ye do,  
 "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not

“unto men; knowing, that from the Lord  
 “ye are to receive the reward of the inheritance.”

The merit of our actions, however good in other respects, will be utterly lost with respect to God; and consequently they cannot be done for his Glory; if they proceed from bad motives; from a vain ostentation; from views of present interest; or from any such false, unsound, principles. Looking therefore beyond the opinions, or praises, of men; and every other worldly consideration; we must study to approve ourselves, and our behaviour, to our Master who is in Heaven. For it is He, that is to be the final judge of our present conduct. It is at his hand alone, that we can hope to find a sure recompence.

Here is your only firm foundation, for virtuous actions! Worldly honors, or preferments, are poor, precarious motives, to the practice of moral duties: Because there are instances innumerable, among every corrupt people; in which, virtue is neither crowned with due applause, nor attended with earthly prosperity. Whereas if the recommending yourself to God, be your real design;

sign; you can never possibly be disappointed, or fail of your reward.

5thly. The Apostle's command of "Doing all to the Glory of God," when applied to Us Christians, undoubtedly includes his other command, of "Doing all in the name of Christ."---We must consider ourselves, as not only the creatures of God; but as the disciples and servants of Christ: As not only enjoying the general Blessings of Heaven, in common with the rest of mankind; but as favoured, in a special manner, with the superior advantages of the Gospel; and as bound therefore to do service to that Gospel, by every method which is in our power.

With this view, we must diligently search the Scriptures; that we may understand them ourselves, and be able to instruct others. We must impartially inquire into the will of God, as it is revealed in these Scriptures; and conscientiously endeavour to promote the knowledge of it, in the world about us. Above all, we must take care, to "Walk worthy of our high calling in Christ;" to adorn his doctrine, by a Christian life; to avoid every thing, that



will prejudice men against his religion, that will hinder them from embracing it, or lead them into any errors, any erroneous notions, concerning it.

More particularly. We must beware of all contention, all factious disputes, in matters of Religion; Which are a peculiar disgrace to the professors of the Gospel of peace, and a peculiar dishonor to its Divine Author. Always remembering, that, whenever men consent about the fundamentals of Christianity, the fear of God, the love of their neighbour, a steadfast faith in Christ as their Savior and Redeemer; they should make every candid allowance for that difference of sentiment about inferior points, which nothing but gross ignorance, or abject slavery, can possibly prevent!

Such a compliance, on all Sides, where we agree in the essentials of godliness, is not only innocent, but it is highly commendable: It is not barely not criminal, but it is our indispensable duty; as it would effectually secure one great end of the Gospel, the present harmony and happiness of the Christian world.

No

No wonder then that it is solemnly enjoined, both in the chapter to which the text belongs, and in other places of the New Testament without number. Nay, the precept of "Doing All to the Glory of God," was delivered upon this very occasion---to dissuade the Corinthians from a practice, which, though not otherwise wrong, might yet, by being taken in a wrong light, displease the contentious, increase the doubts and scruples of the weak, or hinder the conversion of the unreformed Heathen.

"Give therefore," says the pious Apostle, "offence to no man:" 'Refrain from whatever you find has a tendency to disgust, disturb, or misinform the mind, of either Gentile, Jew, or Christian.' Which same excellent advice, he thus expresses, in his epistle to the Romans: "Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his Good, to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." That is, 'Let us, by a charitable construction of each others notions and actions, imitate the example of our Heavenly Master: Whose life, while he dwelt upon earth, was spent in a hum-

‘ble condescension to the infirmities, and  
 ‘even in suffering the reproaches of man-  
 ‘kind, for their spiritual welfare.’

And here, by the way, if such tenderness  
 is due to the consciences of our Brethren;  
 what are we to think of that Atichristian  
 Power, which allows no right of private  
 judgment; which locks up the Scriptures  
 from her peoples eyes, and arbitrarily impos-  
 es her own monstrous doctrines upon their  
 understandings; which shews forth her ho-  
 nor of God, by persecuting his creatures;  
 and is wickedly bent on propagating what  
 She calls Religion, by the very means that  
 are destructive of all Religion: Totally un-  
 mindful wherein God’s Kingdom, and con-  
 sequently his Glory, consists; not in vio-  
 lence and tyranny, but in “mercy, kind-  
 “ness, meekness, long-suffering; in righte-  
 “ousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy  
 “Ghost. For he,” says the same great  
 Apostle, “Who in these things serveth  
 “Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved  
 “of men.”

6thly. Hoping that what has passed up-  
 on this subject, is worthy to be remembered  
 by you; I will now sum it up, for your

more

more easy recollection, as plainly and concisely as I can.

To "Act for the Glory of God," is to behave ourselves towards him, agreeably to the relation he bears to us, as our Maker, Governor, and Judge. --- It is, to pay him reverence, by acknowledging his authority over us, and our subjection to him. --- It is, to inquire diligently into his will, and to regard it in all our conversation; to set a virtuous example, to those around us; to "let our light shine before men, that they may see our Good Works, and glorify our Father who is in Heaven." --- It is, to demonstrate our fear and love of this Supreme Father, by a careful attention to the duties we owe, to Him, our neighbour, and our own persons. --- It is, to have a generous concern for the welfare of our fellow-servants, which is the highest Glory of our common Master; to have an honest zeal, for Religion at large, but especially for the Religion of the Gospel; by which we must regulate our conduct in this world, and be judged hereafter in that which is to come. --- In one word. It is, to live, like men, and Christians; according to the dictates of



natural reason, heightened and improved by the laws of Christ Jesus.

Let this, then, Brethren, be the aim, let it be the ultimate view, of all your pursuits. Have a constant eye to the Glory, of your Maker, and of your Savior: Which is not only the noblest, but the most prudential, the wisest principle, you can possibly act upon. For whatever promotes their honor, will infallibly redound to your own Glory, and insure your everlasting happiness.

Finally. Let the admirable words of St. Paul, whom I have so repeatedly quoted, be your ruling maxim, in every office, in every station. "None of us liveth to himself: "And no man dieth to himself. But whether "we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether "we die, we die unto him"---"we were 'not born, for ourselves alone, but for the 'assistance of each other; for the service of 'the God and Father of us all.'

To whom be Praise and Dominion.

## S E R M O N XXI.

## MATTHEW VI. 4.

*Blessed are they that Mourn. For they shall  
be comforted.*

**T**HOUGH this second Blessing in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, pronounced upon them that mourn, or that labor under some afflictive circumstances, might perhaps more immediately relate to the primitive Christians, and to the distresses which they underwent on account of their Religion; yet it was, beyond all dispute, intended ultimately to comprehend the  
Christians

Christians of every succeeding age.---Not scrupling to take this for granted, I shall treat the subject in the following obvious method.

I. I shall shew you in what instances, and by what behavior on Our part, affliction may become a Blessing to us.

II. I will inquire into the reason, whereupon the Blessing, here pronounced by our Savior, is founded. "Blessed are they that Mourn : For They shall be Comforted."

III. Hence, among other reflections arising from what has passed, I shall remind you of the happiness, comparatively speaking, which the most afflicted Christians may enjoy, under the certain prospect of this Heavenly Comfort.

But, before I enter directly upon these topics; let me just remark to you, that 'it is not every kind of affliction indiscriminately, or merely as such, which will render a man Blessed.' Oh, No! Wicked men may be afflicted, nay often times actually are so; and yet, for want of making a good improvement of their afflictions, receive rather hurt than benefit from them. They are consequently virtuous afflictions only. (I mean

(I mean afflictions, virtuously borne) that will intitle the sufferers of them, to a Blessing. The principal instances of which, are these, I am going to mention.

I. 1. Then. "Blessed are they that mourn," under sickness of body; if they bear it patiently; if they consider it, and behave under it, as inflicted by the Hand of their Heavenly Father, for the proof of their fortitude, or for the correction of their sins; -- if they take occasion from it, to meditate upon the frailty of human nature, upon our continual dependence on that All-ruling Providence, which is the Supreme Disposer of health and sickness. --- This is one of the most general, the most universal instances of mourning or affliction, under which men labour; and which is perpetually capable of being applied by them, to the salutary purposes of Religion.

2dly. "Blessed are they that mourn," under the loss, especially under the sudden, unexpected loss, of their friends, by death; if it warns them to recollect the shortness, and uncertainty, of life; if it teaches them to place their grand reliance upon that Almighty Friend, who will never leave them,  
who



who can never be parted from them, "who  
 "only hath Immortality;" and over whom  
 Death neither has, nor can ever possibly ob-  
 tain, the smallest dominion.---This is a se-  
 cond, and a no less common example of  
 Mourning than the former; nor at all less  
 capable of being converted by us, to the be-  
 neficial ends of Christianity.

3dly. "Blessed are they that mourn,"  
 under a third sort of Providential Calami-  
 ties; storms, floods, earthquakes, unfruitful  
 seasons; or any the like not infrequent  
 deviations from the ordinary course of natu-  
 ral events. Blessed, I say, are they; who  
 resolve all these seeming irregularities, into  
 the good pleasure of that All-sufficient Go-  
 vernor; who, whether We understand it or  
 not, orders all things for the best, in the na-  
 tural as well as in the moral world.---The  
 general truth, the general rule, is; 'Blessed  
 'are they, who, under whatever surpasse  
 'human knowledge, or human comprehen-  
 'sion, piously submit themselves to Divine  
 'Wisdom.' Such a disposition of humility,  
 is so amiable in itself, so agreeable to the  
 spirit of the Gospel, so becoming the weak-  
 ness and imperfection of our faculties, that  
 it

it cannot but be highly acceptable in the sight of God.

4thly. Blessed, in the fourth instance intended by our Savior, are they who 'mourn, through injuries which they have 'received, from the wickedness of men.' Blessed indeed are they, who bear those injuries, without being thirsty of retaliation, or revenge; without wishing to return the injurious treatment, or to execute vengeance for themselves; without losing their temper, and forfeiting their charity; that is, in different language, without imitating the wicked creatures, by whom they suffer, and whose actions they condemn.---This virtue of forbearance, this reference of our wrongs to the final judgment of God, is one essential mark of a Christian; and cannot fail to derive a Blessing upon the man, in whom it is found.

5thly. I think it almost needless for me to say any thing here, concerning those unfortunate Persons, who mourn under afflictions, or persecutions, on account of Religion. First, because this calamity, God be thanked, however frequent in the early days of the Gospel, has no place amongst us at  
 present;

present; who enjoy a free and full toleration in all matters of conscience, if we were but wise enough to make a proper use of it. Secondly, because our Savior, in the tenth verse of this same chapter, takes a separate notice of this particular instance of human sufferings, and pronounces a separate Blessing upon it. "Blessed," says he, "are they that are persecuted for Righteousness sake." (for the sake of Christianity.) "For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

6thly. According to the merciful tenor and terms of the Gospel, "Blessed are even the wicked themselves that mourn;" when their sorrow is of the Godly, of the penitent, sort; when it causes them "to turn from the evil of their ways," into a new and contrary life.---Such a sorrow is not merely their greatest, but it is their only, Blessing. It is a Blessing, without which, they must infallibly be for ever lost; but by means of which, they will, As infallibly, be everlastingly saved. This is the sorrow recommended by St. Paul, in the seventh chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians; "The sorrow, that worketh Repentance unto Salvation, never to be repented of." It will

will prove a most joyful mourning to all sinners, who will suffer it to come to maturity, and to produce its perfect fruit.

7thly, and to finish the first general head of this discourse. Blessed, above all men, are those pious souls; who, being innocent themselves, mourn, not for their own sins, but out of tender compassion to the sins of the people about them: Who, in other words, pity, not only the unavoidable miseries, but the voluntary and deliberate crimes, of their neighbour.

Upon the sublime plan of morality taught by Christ, this is the most generous, the most meritorious expression and instance of mourning. It extends our compassion, even to our enemies; even to the men, of whose wickedness we ourselves are the objects. And therefore, according to the Christian (the only true) estimate of human virtue, it is worthy, in the highest degree, of that reward, which I come now to take into consideration. Let me add however, that our Savior has abundantly justified the idea which I entertain concerning this last article of mourning, by his own Divine example;



example; by actually weeping over the city Jerusalem, and her sinful inhabitants; though he perfectly knew they would very shortly put him to a most shameful, as well as a most cruel, death. But, to proceed;

II. Our Lord's promise here, to the afflicted persons above-mentioned, and to all who justly come under that character, is; that "They shall be Comforted."---Which promise, however differing in phrase, is undoubtedly the same in substance, with the promises made to the other Righteous persons, specified in the chapter before us: To the meek, and the merciful; to the pure in heart; to the lovers, and makers, of peace.---These promises are, that "They shall obtain mercy; that "Great shall be their reward, "in Heaven;" that "They shall be called "the Children of God; and shall be received by him, as such, into his Kingdom."---All which language, as I have observed to you upon a similar occasion, and as I hinted to you in part just now, speaks the same important Doctrine: Namely, that "Men will be amply recompensed in a future life, for the Good Works which they do, and for the evils which they bear  
with

‘with a Christian Spirit, in the present  
‘one.’

Since this, then, is most clearly the general sense of the promise in the text; and since the future joys of Heaven, are incapable of being particularly explained to us in our present state, as well as utterly needless to be so explained; I shall not dwell any longer upon this second head; but shall pass on; and point out, III, the reflections that may be drawn from the subject, as the proper use, or application, of it.

Wherefore, 1. Let us reflect, how happy, in the essential meaning of that word, under even the most distressful worldly circumstances, Christians are, from the prospect of their future reward; provided they do but fear God, and keep his commandments: Which is the condition, proposed by God himself; and which he has solemnly engaged, on his part, to fulfil.

2dly. Let us remark the nobly benevolent scheme of the Gospel: Which makes happiness (true happiness) the common possession, if I may so say, of us all: Not confining it to birth, or station; not subjecting it to the will of man, to the caprice of  
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fortune, or to any the like arbitrary or precarious causes; but placing it absolutely within every one's own power. Christianity assures us, that 'the deepest affliction may, if we please, be converted by us, nay that it was graciously Intended to be converted by us, into the highest felicity.'

3dly. You see, from the single instance of the Blessing pronounced in the text, the superior excellence of Christianity, not only above the mere religion of nature, but also above that of Moses and the Prophets.---The religion of nature, could give men nothing more, than probable expectations of a future state; and consequently could give Good Men nothing more, than probable comfort under affliction.---The Religion of Moses, had only "A shadow," as St. Paul calls it, only a figurative faint resemblance, "of good things to come;" but no clear, no express, manifestation of them. So that virtuous men in affliction, even under the Mosaic Law, wanted some firmer support, some "stronger consolation," than their Law-giver had provided for them.---Whereas We live under a dispensation, which has thrown new light upon every article of mo-  
ral

ral and religious knowledge. Which has explicitly informed us, that all natural, human, or providential calamities, whether in high life or in low, among the rich or the poor, are the exercise of our piety, the subject-matter of our virtue, the means of exalting us to eternal glory. For,

4thly, Let it be especially remembered, that what the Gospel teaches us in this interesting point, holds equally true, concerning each example of the afflictions, which I enumerated under the first head: Sickness of body; unforeseen death of friends; injuries sustained, from natural causes, or from the iniquity of men.---In each and all of these, or in whatever other ways we can possibly be liable to present calamities, the rule is the same, for all estates, for all orders, of Christian people. ‘Do but bear them with resignation to the Providence of God, with charity to the failings of mankind, with a conscientious discharge of your own personal duties: and then, the most unfortunate of you all, will be finally as happy, as the most prosperous; the most indigent creature living, as the wealthiest monarch upon the Globe’ ---than which doctrine, you cannot I am



sure conceive any thing, more worthy to come from Heaven, or more impartially adapted to the various conditions and infirmities of men.

5thly. The concluding part of this application, will not improperly be directed, in particular, to the inferior degrees of men amongst us. With whom it is an almost universal opinion, that 'Worldly afflictions' are very unfairly distributed; that by far 'the hardest and heaviest portion, falls upon themselves.'

Now, if we look upon afflictions in a religious light, as the trial of our patience, and of our piety to God; in This Light, they are equally needful for, and must extend indifferently to, all sorts of men. If we look upon them in a human view, or as events arising from the present constitution of human things; in This View, I am sure, you will find them to be actually common to us all. Bodily disorders; the separation of the dearest friends, by death; unjust and ungrateful treatment, from the world; the sorrow of profligate, unruly, children; the wicked, unnatural, improvidence of extravagant parents;---these are scenes of evil,  
known

known and felt by all classes of people, throughout our own, as well as every other nation under the sun.

Again. The several tribes of men, are sensible of the inconveniences incident to their own particular order: About which they are seldom or never backward to complain. But they do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, those that belong to the different orders around them: Wherein they betray a manifest want, either of discernment, or of honesty; or perhaps of both.--- Thus, to a man of low rank, poverty appears in horrors now! But he never reflects, 'How many thousand disquietudes inseparably attend superior stations; and from which He, amidst all his imaginary or real sufferings, is entirely exempt.' He never calls to mind, that 'Riches cannot possibly create happiness; but have created, and everlastingly will create, miseries, without number, without end!' He pays no kind of regard to our Savior's Divine Maxim, though verified by daily observation; that "A man's life" (the true enjoyment of his life) "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."---Hence it is,

that so many persons, in what are called mean circumstances, discover such a degree of discontentment, as can be defended upon no principle, of reason, or experience; much less of Christianity. For,

Lastly, Allowing the matter in question, that 'The largest share of worldly troubles, naturally falls to the lot of the poor;' the only inference, to Christians, will be a most desirable one: Namely that, 'If they bear these troubles in the manner, and apply them to the purposes, recommended above; the more illustrious will be their crown of reward, in Heaven.' They will find no such thing as poverty, There; but treasures inexhaustible; to which no tyrant can approach, which no violence can deprive them of! There, "The rich and the poor will meet together:" All God's faithful servants will be for ever united, under Christ their Righteous Sovereign, the "Head of all principality and power."

In the mean time Brethren, if you wish, as I hope you all do, to be one day admitted into that blessed society; I have often told you, and shall make an end with repeating, the effectual measures you are to pursue.

Let

Let each of you, of whatever degree or denomination, dutifully conform to the nature of his situation. Let him cheerfully encounter the difficulties, and honestly endeavor to perform the offices, appertaining to it. Let him remember, as a constant lesson of contentment, that 'No post, no character, in this transitory life, is privileged from afflictions;' that, 'upon the principles of Religion, no man breathing, either can be, or ought to be, superior to misfortunes.'

By such sentiments, and such behavior, could they universally prevail, the metaphorical descriptions, which the ancient Prophets have given of Christianity, would be morally and truly fulfilled. "The crooked would be made straight, the rough places smooth: The tears would be wiped away from off all faces, and all flesh would see the Salvation of God."

To whom, only wise, &c.



the following of the

## S E R M O N XXII.

P S A L M. XV, 2.

*And speaketh the Truth from his Heart.*

\* **T**HIS Psalm, in a very short compass, contains a question of the utmost importance; and resolves it by an answer, that is agreeable to every maxim, of solid reason, as well as of sound religion. "Lord, " who shall dwell in thy Tabernacle: Or " who shall rest upon thy Holy Hill?" Who is the man, worthy to be called a true worshipper of God here, and deserving to be rewarded by him in Heaven hereafter?" " It " is he, that leadeth an uncorrupt life; that " doeth

“doeth the thing which is right; and  
 “speaketh the truth from his heart.” It is  
 the man of integrity, towards his Maker, and  
 his neighbor: Who, though he be absolutely  
 perfect in no instance of duty, is sincere, and  
 diligent, in them all. “He that” (accord-  
 ing to the translation used in our prayer-  
 books) “setteth not by himself, but is lowly  
 “in his own eyes, and maketh much of  
 “them that fear the Lord.” A modest man,  
 a lover of piety, a friend and encourager of all  
 pious persons.

The virtue, upon which the text directs  
 me to discourse, is one, that universally en-  
 ters into the definition, into the idea, of a  
 good man; namely, veracity, in his conver-  
 sation: “He speaketh the truth from his  
 “heart.” Our Bible-version, and the Sep-  
 tuagint, adhere more closely to the original  
 ---“He speaketh the truth, in his heart.”  
 ‘As he never does any injustice in his ac-  
 ‘tions; so he never conceives any falsehood,  
 ‘in his thoughts.’

The subject naturally points out the fol-  
 lowing method of treating it: To make  
 some suitable remarks, upon the several  
 ways, both of true and false speaking: To  
 shew

shew you, in general, and in some principal particulars, what is the merit of the one, and the guilt of the other : To exhort you, by proper persuasives, that you regulate your practice accordingly.

I shall begin with the latter ; with the sin of false-speaking ; to which I shall confine myself in the present sermon ; and which I will, I, endeavor to explain. II, I will lay before you such arguments, as may either preserve, or recover, you, from this detestable vice ; which vice, though not expressly mentioned in the text, is most manifestly implied in it.

I, Then. I am to offer some observations, concerning the nature of false-speaking ; in order to inform you, what it is, that constitutes the odious crime, commonly called lying.

I shall not enter into a critical inquiry, in how many Singular cases a person may speak an untruth, without any (at least without any considerable) blame. Such cases, I well know, we all take advantage of. Human sins, and human infirmities, make it a matter of necessity, to do so.

Thus,



Thus, we deceive children, to keep them out of mischief; and cheat them with Words, that we may bring them to comply with what we think will do them good. Thus, the Physician conceals the truth from his patient; when he judges that the knowledge of it would do the man harm. He gives his remedy a false name; because the true one, perhaps, might cause it to be rejected, or might endanger its success. So, again; we make no scruple of telling a highwayman a falsity; to save our own, or another person's, life. And, upon the same principle, we suppose that a lunatic, or a madman, has no right to hear the truth.

In short,---We lay hold on falsehood, in sundry cases, where we believe the truth would occasion some evil; or where a deceit will produce, at least, some visible, present, good. Which cases being unavoidable, and the intention of the speaker being pure charity; we conclude, that a mere falsity of Words can be no breach of conscience. And, in my opinion, the man who wants to weigh the sin of such verbal frauds, will find it a difficult matter, to procure either scales  
or

or weights fine enough, to answer his purpose.

Take special notice therefore, that, whenever the Scriptures mention false-speaking, as a Crime; they uniformly describe it, as having some bad purpose, some wicked design, in view; some scheme to injure the reputation, person, or property, of other men. Accordingly, in the Psalm now before us, the criminal false-speaker is He, that employs his tongue, to the "reproaching, backbiting, and slandering, his neighbor."

Upon the whole, you may depend upon this, as a safe maxim--that 'the less ill-will, the less injustice, the less extensive danger, accompanies any untruth; the less, in proportion, is the immorality of it.'

But, though falsity, in the instances above-mentioned (as I have stated them) is certainly free from guilt; yet it will be very proper to guard ourselves with some rules of caution, which may secure us from running beyond the bounds of innocence, both in these, and in all other instances.

Let

Let me remark therefore, in the first place, that 'It is our prudence, nay it is our strict duty, to deal, either in speaking falsely, or in disguising the truth, as little, and as seldom, as we possibly can.' For truth and falsehood, even in our very words, are generally matters of the highest consequence, as well as of the tenderest nature. They are like light and darkness to the world; in perpetual danger of being applied to some bad use. The one has a sacredness, if I may so say, originally stamp'd upon it: The other carries in it, something ignominious; at least something unnatural, something not entirely right. Insomuch that, when we knowingly speak falsely, even in what we call innocent cases, such as those I just now produced; an ingenuous mind always feels a reluctance, a disinclination, in doing it; which nothing but necessity, to whose power all must yield, can overcome. So closely are truth, morality and conscience, connected; that it must be an acute eye indeed, which can discern any distance, any difference, between them.

These reasons call upon every man to take  
special

special care, both what things he speaks, and in what manner he speaks them. Error, or a bare mistake of truth, may often be very excuseable: But the degree of excuse for speaking what is False, will depend upon the degree of pains you take to understand the matters, about which you speak. And where there is no direct intention of speaking Falsely, there may be extreme negligence, extreme folly, in not endeavoring to be well assured, that you speak Truly.

For the same reasons, much greater caution ought to be used, than commonly is used, in various instances.---Thus. There are, as I have already allowed, a few unavoidable Occasions; on which you may fairly make free with truth and falsehood, towards your children, and some other persons. But if you do this too repeatedly, or for frivolous causes; the consequences will become far more serious, than you may suspect. And though you neither intend to be guilty yourself, nor wish to have Them guilty, of the immoral falsehood called lying; yet you prepare them for it; you give them a pretence for it; you shew them the way to it. By setting them an  
example



example of false-speaking, in things of little moment; you put them in readiness, and into a temptation too, of doing it in matters of superior concern.---So, by letting a servant frequently see, that you can dispense with truth, and think it no transgression of duty; you incur the certain hazard of enticing Him to falsify his word, in order to screen his Faults. Ignorant, injudicious, minds, must be judiciously treated. And if you would not embolden them to run into evil; you must keep them, as much as can be, from every approach to it.

Suffer me to make the like observations, upon many other modes of false-speaking; upon high flights, and extravagant figures, of speech; upon that illiberal species of affected wit, whose aim is, to try the tempers, to ridicule the oddities, or to expose the infirmities, of other men.

These abuses of the tongue (for such they must be termed) are more or less innocent, according to the application we severally make of them; according to the situations, characters, and qualities, of the persons, at whom they are levelled. But, whatever be their immediate subject; an imprudent

imprudent freedom in the exercise of them, leads to plain, palpable, evil. There is so near an affinity, between Idle Talk, and Lying Talk; that a too frequent indulgence of the former, insensibly draws us into the latter. So that hardly any thing is more common, than to find loose banter and rodomontade, terminating at length in downright falsehood. A man's sporting with truth, from the vanity of showing off his wit; is exactly like playing with a Serpent, till he foolishly provokes it to bite him!

Finally. Many people accustom themselves to an unmanly practice, of relating strange, improbable, stories, on divers matters; chiefly, if not entirely, of their own invention; merely to waste time; to excite the wonder of the company, or to laugh at their credulity.

Concerning this last tribe of false-speakers, I make no doubt you have often heard it said; that 'they use themselves to tell Lyes, till they fancy them to be really true.'---That men can grossly impose upon each other, is a pretty clear point. How far they can blind and delude themselves, I

shall not undertake to determine. But the very saying itself shews you, what an opinion we entertain of the force of inveterate habit, in this, as well as in all other instances of vice.

I have hitherto considered those ways only of false-speaking, which are generally accounted the more harmless degrees of it.

With respect to those examples of it, which are universally reckoned scandalous, and criminal; They are these, or such as these, that follow.---Denying the truth, for the purpose of concealing our guilt, and appearing innocent; which is heaping one sin, upon the back of another.---Uttering direct falsties, with a view of deceiving, or circumventing, our neighbor; to His injury, and for Our Own iniquitous advantage.---Defaming a character, which we verily believe to be a fair one; out of vile envy, or with some other dirty, malicious, design.---Flattering those, who, we know, are bad men; and whom, in our hearts, we, all the while, despise: Which is what the Scripture calls "Sewing pillows to their armholes;" and is the infallible way to make Them, as well

well as ourselves, a great deal worse, than they were before.

These, with the like enormities of the tongue, stand in need of very little explanation; and indeed are so abominable, that I could wish to take leave of them, as things which ought not so much as to be named among Christians. But since it is manifest from daily experience, that they are not barely named, but notoriously practised amongst us; Let me request your attention to two or three arguments: The weakest of which has force enough, to guard you against them, or to determine you to set about reforming them.

II. The first argument, that should suppress false-speaking; both in the instances of it, now last mentioned; and every other sinful species of deceit, whether in words or actions;---the first argument, I say, that should suppress this whole vice, is; 'The  
' unnumbered mischiefs it creates, in the  
' world; the wars, between nations; the  
' confusion and perplexities, in trade; the  
' quarrels in neighborhoods, in families;  
' the bitter enmities betwixt man and man,



' where either, especially where both, parties, are guilty of it.'

Such are the wretched effects of falsehood, under its different shapes, and in its manifold branches. All which the Apostle St. James has summed up, in the most expressive, and the strongest terms: But in no stronger terms, than the quality of the subject required. "The tongue," says he, "is a fire; a world of iniquity. It is full of deadly poison, and defileth the whole body. It setteth on fire the course of nature" ('it puts Human Nature into a flame') "and is itself set on fire from Hell."

I must insist here upon one example of false-speaking, that signally verifies this description of St. James, and may serve to give you a just abhorrence of all the rest. The example I mean, is False-Swearing, or Perjury. Which is so profane, so daring an insult, upon Almighty God himself; so frequently defeats the ends of public justice; and is so destructive of the rights, oftentimes of the lives, of the people who suffer by it!

If therefore you were to study for a definition

definition of 'A compleatly bad man, and  
' bad member of society;' you could not  
possibly draw it, in blacker characters than  
these. 'He is a fellow, who can, coolly and  
' deliberately, call upon his God, to bear  
' witness to the truth, of what he knows to  
' be false. He is a fellow, who can so-  
' lemnly swear away the reputation, the pro-  
' perty, and even the very life, of his neigh-  
' bor.'

But the foregoing considerations, how-  
ever weighty in themselves, are chiefly con-  
siderations of general utility: To which par-  
ticular wicked men, are apt to pay very little  
regard.---Let me, then, offer you a second,  
and a more personal argument, against false-  
speaking: An argument, that comes home  
to every man's own feelings: An argu-  
ment, that "judges him, out of his own  
"mouth." This argument is, that

No false-speaker can bear, with any tem-  
per, to be told his crime. In plainer Eng-  
lish, no Liar can endure to hear himself Cal-  
led so. And the more he is addicted to this  
fault, the more impatient is He of the Only  
appellation, that Can belong to it. He will  
say, he will contrive and do, any thing upon  
earth,

earth, rather than acknowledge the justice of the accusation. Thus, again; your pretended gentlemen of honor, though they do not possess a single grain of real virtue, would shed the blood of any man, who should charge them with Lying, and would run the hazard of having their own blood shed in the conflict.

The case is the same, with impostors of whatsoever denomination. The rankest cheat alive, will utterly deny his knavery; will strive and struggle, with all his might, to shake off the infamy, that adheres to it. He perversely loves to do the action: But he hates the character, which it fixes upon him.

The inference is clear, and fully answers my purpose: Namely that the conduct of a Liar---under which word, I include every man that has a False Heart, as well as him, that has a False Tongue---the conduct of every such Hypocrite, is at war with his judgment, with his impartial sentiments. He sins against his conscience, and is self-condemned. He disclaims what he Is, and would fain pass for what he is Not. He persists in his vices, though he has it constantly

stantly in his power, to forsake them; though, as St. Paul justly observes, he, all the while, "sees and knows the Judgment of God; that they, who do such things, are worthy of death."

But the grand argument against false-speaking, inexpressibly more than equivalent to all others, at least with a Christian, is this. "It is forbidden, throughout the New Testament, as a most heinous crime; and has the heaviest sentence pronounced upon it." Of which I beg you will hearken to the following evidences.

Our Savior signalizes the Devil himself, by calling him a Liar, and the Father of Lies. St. Paul describes the most degenerate state of the ancient Heathens; by telling us, that "They did not obey the Truth; but obeyed Unrighteousness, and Falseness."—St. James earnestly warns the Hebrew converts to the Gospel, that "if any man amongst them seemed to be Religious," or fancied himself a pious Christian, "and did not bridle his tongue," did not keep it within the bounds of Charity and Truth; "Such a man's Religion was vain." Instead of pretending to set himself



up for a zealous Disciple of Christ, he had infinitely better throw off the mask, and declare himself an Infidel.---I shall only add the awful denunciation of our Lord's beloved Disciple, St. John. " Into That " Kingdom" (into the future Heavenly Kingdom of Christ) " there shall in no wise " enter any thing that defileth, and is un- " clean ; that maketh, or loveth, a Lie." So, again ; in the same chapter : " Murderers, " Sorcerers, Idolaters, and all Liars, shall " have their portion in the lake that burn- " eth with fire and brimstone."

If the three foregoing arguments, in particular the last, cannot deter or reclaim Christians, from the sin of false-speaking ; I am sure we may safely affirm of Them, as our Savior did of his profligate countrymen, the Jews. " If they hear not Moses, and " the Prophets ;" if they pay no attention to their own reason, supported by the authority of Christ, and his Apostles ; " nei- " ther will they be persuaded, though one " arose from the dead."

I have now finished what I had to say, upon the disagreeable, the rather melancholy, part of the subject---the sinful proper-  
tics,

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ties, and terrible consequences, of a deceitful tongue.

I hope, when we meet here again, to discuss the more pleasing and comfortable part ---the virtue, benefits, and blessing, of  
“ Speaking the Truth from our Hearts.”

To God, only wise.

S E R M O N XXIII.



S E R M O N XXIII.

PSALM. XV. 2.

*And speaketh the Truth, from his Heart.*

\* **W**HEN I made choice of these words, as a proper subject to discourse upon; I thought the most instructive method of treating them, would be---‘to set forth ‘the sin of false-speaking, as well as the duty ‘of speaking truth:’ Without the former of which, I judged that the latter would be rather imperfect.

I have, accordingly, in a preceding sermon, taken some pains to inform you, what kinds of false-speaking are commonly esteemed,



ed, and perhaps are really, innocent; what kinds of it are universally deemed, and are undoubtedly, sinful.

I likewise gave you a few necessary cautions, 'Not to be too free, in your use of 'the First;' and the strongest reasons, 'why 'you should constantly shun the second.'

In the present discourse, I shall make it my business, to consider the virtue of speaking truth: And shall, I, endeavor to shew you, on what occasions you should Not speak, even the Real Truth; and in what Manner you Should speak it, when it ought to be spoken.---II. I shall offer such arguments, as may induce you to a careful practice of the duty thus explained.

I. I am to take notice of certain occasions, on which you ought to decline speaking the truth; and on which the speaking it, would at least be imprudent, perhaps directly criminal.

As, in some kinds of false-speaking, there may be sundry considerations, which will very much abate, or entirely remove, the evil of it; so many things, although truly spoken, may yet, by being injudiciously spoken, not only lose all their grace, but have

have all their benefit spoiled, and terminate in downright mischief.

The Royal Psalmist tells us, in the text, that "Truth is to be spoken, from the Heart." But he was, by no means, so unskilful a moralist, as to imagine, that mere innocency, or a mere freedom from ill design, is alone sufficient to constitute a virtuous speaker. No! Though you may think it a pity, as I myself do; it is nevertheless indisputably certain, that the most honest hearts sometimes speak truth, to very little good effect, or even to a very bad one. Innocence of intention, in such a corrupted world, but especially in such a corrupted age, as this of ours, may frequently want the needful address and artifice of expression. In short. It is a due regard to Circumstances, that gives virtue to the tongue, and the highest value to truth.---I will therefore point out the most material of these circumstances, for the better illustration, of my meaning, and of the subject.

I, Then. In numerous cases, Times and Seasons are the grand rule, by which we should be directed; and often are such, as to render it far more wise, far more beneficial upon

upon all accounts, to conceal what we know, than to divulge it. For example,

When your declaring any truth, or any matter of fact, would, in all probability, do considerable hurt to one man, without doing the smallest service to any other man, or to your own self;---nay, when it would, moreover, create dissentions, and break the peace, among neighbors, or between friends;---at all such junctures, and upon all such suppositions, an ill-timed publication of the most incontestable truth, would not be barely foolish, but it would be extremely prejudicial.

‘ There is an immense variety of things,  
‘ that are not to be spoken, because they are  
‘ literally true; but because they are fit, be-  
‘ cause they are proper, to be spoken.  
Which is so salutary a maxim, that he who pays no regard to it, may justly be said to pay no regard to truth itself.

You need go no further for this lesson, than to your own common sense, observation, and experience. But, if these should fail to inform you; the admirable son of Sirach has done it, in a few most excellent words. “ There is one,” says he, “ that  
“ keepeth

“ keepeth silence, and is found wise : There  
 “ is another, who, by much babbling, be-  
 “ cometh hateful. Some men hold their  
 “ tongues, because they have nothing to an-  
 “ swer : And some keep silence, knowing  
 “ their Time. A wise man will hold his  
 “ tongue, till he seeth Opportunity : But a  
 “ Babbler and a Fool will regard no Time.  
 “ Even a wise sentence shall be rejected,  
 “ when it cometh from the mouth of a fool :  
 “ For he will not speak it, in Due Season.  
 “ The lips of Talkers will be telling things,  
 “ that do not belong to them : But the  
 “ words of those who have understanding,  
 “ are weighed in a balance. The heart of  
 “ fools, is in their mouth : But the mouth  
 “ of the wise, is in their heart.”

2. Again. The very nature of some  
 truths is such, that they cannot be freely or  
 unreservedly spoken, without great sinfulness,  
 and cruelty. Of which let me give  
 you the following instance.

All of us, to a man, have our failings.  
 Some of us, have one vice ; and many of us,  
 I am afraid, have more than one.---Now, I  
 say, the exposing all these defects to the  
 world,



world, at random, for no urgent or sufficient cause, could never possibly do much good, and would frequently do an infinite deal of harm.

It is therefore unpardonable injustice in you, wantonly to speak all the worst, that you know of your neighbor; even though you speak not a syllable more, than the strict truth. Because, in speaking This, you must be conscious, that you are doing, as you would be extremely loath to be done by. For there is not one of us in twenty, no nor one in twice the number; who would not tremble at the thought, that 'all his faults, 'the whole darker side of him, were to be 'instantly laid open to every human eye.' Such a disclosure, believe me, would make the major part of us look very differently, from what they did before! So that I exceedingly doubt, 'whether there be more 'guilt, in venting some gross Lies; than 'there is, in uttering some ill-natured, in- 'human, truths.' Indeed, upon recollection, I think that the question will hardly bear a debate!

Further, yet. When you are not contented

tented with merely publishing other mens defects, but set them out in the artful dress of satyr; when you give them all the paint of wit, all the high coloring of ingenious ridicule;---I am absolutely certain, that, allowing there may be no direct falsehood in this mode of talking; there is a detestable want of equity, candor, and charity!---So bad a thing may truth itself become, when you speak it with an ill meaning, or direct it to a wrong purpose!

Under the two foregoing articles, I have briefly advertised you, ‘How truth may lose all its native virtue, and even degenerate into a vice; when it is delivered, either by a foolish tongue, or by a malicious one.’

Let me now inquire into the real excellency, into the real utility, of speaking truth.---“You are to speak the truth,” says the pious Psalmist, “from your Heart.---Which very injunction supposes, that you speak your sentiments, in a becoming manner, time, and place; with a virtuous intention to advance the important ends of truth. It supposes, that you are Called Upon to speak; that you speak upon a rightful, upon a needful; occasion.---And, in all such cases, you

will uniformly support the amiable character of "One that speaks the truth;" if you will be pleased to observe the following easy directions: "To speak it with plainness and simplicity; with courage and integrity."---On each of which essential qualities in a man of veracity, I beg your leave to offer a word or two.

Whenever, then, you are called to declare the truth, whether in a public, or in a private cause; where the good of your country, or the good of your neighborhood, demands it; remember always to do it, with an ingenuous plainness; free from all double meanings, from all subtle ambiguities, or knavish reservations. Never attempt to pervert the noble faculty of speech, which is the glory of man, and distinguishes him from the brutes. Never wish to deny your brethren, the common blessing of their own language. Never dare to disfigure the beautiful face of truth; by shewing her with one eye open, and clapping a Blind over the other. But let your words be the genuine picture of your mind. Let your expressions come from your heart, and be the full interpretation

terpretation of it.---Thus you will indeed fulfil the duty here recommended by the great King and Prophet to his subjects.

Again. In your more ordinary conversation, in your daily business, in your worldly traffick, nay and even in your mutual forms of address; take a conscientious heed, that your words convey nothing more, than your Intention; that the former always correspond, and keep pace, with the latter. Raise no higher expectations in the minds of those with whom you discourse, than what you really design to satisfy. Do not incur the fashionable shame (I am afraid I should rather say the fashionable Want of shame) of suffering your tongue to throw out twice, or ten times, as much, as is lodged in your heart; of letting your actions give the palpable lie to your words!

How naturally does this caution lead me to mention a very just article of complaint, against our countrymen of the present times.

In the good old days, mens expressions of respect, or of civility, to each other, were comprised in a few strong, manly, terms. But now a days, what a profusion of affected



courtesy, what a torrent of fulsome compliment, is poured out between people, who know very little of one another, beside their dress, and their faces; who have no kind of affection for each other's persons, no kind of attachment to each other's interest.

In such an almost universal departure from the ancient English simplicity; if some of our Grandfathers, or especially of Their Fathers, could rise up amongst us; they would require a dictionary, to construe the language of their native country. They would be amazed to find, how many words, and those of the finest sort, are degraded and prostituted to stand for nothing. They would be under a dreadful apprehension, of what is already well nigh come to pass; 'that we should soon pay as little regard to our actions, as we do to our expressions.'---Indeed I believe it has been experienced, in all ages and in all nations, that 'Good Morals always decayed, as fast as good and great words grew into vogue, without any meaning.'

One notorious cause of the increase of this refined hypocrisy among us, is our senseless ambition to imitate the stile and manners of a neighboring

a neighboring people, eminent for their false politeness, and real treachery, towards Us, beyond all men.---But, as I have not the smallest hope, that it is in My Power to stem the tide of this infatuation; let us return to the subject.---Lastly, therefore,

Wherever truth is necessary to be spoken, "speaking it, from the heart," signifies, 'speaking it with a becoming share of fortitude and resolution.'

There is a Dignity in truth, and in the love of it, which ought to lift the heart of man, above every mean or selfish view: which ought to lift him, I say, in all public concerns, above self-interest, zeal for a party, or the fear of vulgar disgrace: Which, in his private capacity, should set him above all low artifices to impose upon any man for the sake of a little "Filthy Lucre," as St. Paul with just indignation repeatedly calls it.

Having thus illustrated the duty of speaking truth, in the principal instances, wherein it appears to be incumbent upon us; my next undertaking, is;

II. To propose a few arguments, that  
D d 3 may

may persuade you to an habitual observance, to an habitual practice, of it.

And the finding these arguments, will not be a matter of much difficulty, nor take up too much of our time. I need only reverse the three, which I produced, to deter you from the sin of false-speaking; and apply them, when so reversed, to the virtue of speaking truth.

The first of these arguments, as you may remember, was; 'the infinite mischiefs, 'which falsity of speech creates, among man- 'kind; wars, between nations; quarrels 'and distractions, in towns, in neighbor- 'hoods, in families; bitter enmities, be- 'twixt private persons.

The contrary to all which, being intuitively the result of an uniform and mutual regard to truth; I shall not attempt to enter into a formal proof of so manifest a point. I will content myself with appealing to your own reflection, whether you can imagine a more substantial blessing in your lives, than that of 'being always certain to hear the 'honest truth; from your children, your 'servants, your tradesmen, your compa- 'nions;



“nions, from all the people in short, with whom you have daily, interesting, and inevitable, connections.

I shall not wait for any reply, to this decisive question; because I am perfectly sure beforehand, what your answer will be, what it cannot but be: Namely, that you are sorry such veracity has not more generally prevailed, and heartily wish it may, for the future, universally prevail.

If these are your sentiments, you cannot possibly mistake your rule.

Let each of you, by a strict conformity to truth, contribute his own particular part, towards the accomplishment of the great, common, end.---Thus much every man is undoubtedly able to do: And thus much every man is indispensably obliged to do; whether other people will be so wise as to follow his example, or not.

My second argument against false-speaking, was; that All Liars are self-condemned; that they are utterly ashamed of, and abhor the being charged with, the crime they are guilty of.---On the opposite side, all they who “speak the Truth from their Heart,” have the Approbation of their Heart, the constant applauses of their



own mind. I do not mean, that they openly applaud themselves, or sound their own praises; which no good men ever do, except upon some needful occasion. But I mean, that they have a secret satisfaction, arising from their conduct, and inseparably annexed to it. They have an internal pleasure, void of all vanity, similar to that, which St. Paul felt, from a conscious sense of his own veracity. "I speak the truth in Christ, "I lie not; My conscience also bearing me witness, in the Holy Ghost." So, elsewhere: "Our rejoicing," says he, "is this; the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world."

Such was Solomon's doctrine, long before the days of St. Paul. "A good man," says that excellent moralist, "is satisfied from himself." He is inwardly happy, by the enjoyment of inward peace; by a freedom from that self-conviction and self-reproach, which all the dealers in falsehood more or less suffer.

My third and last argument, against "using deceit in our tongues," was; that such

‘such deceit is directly repugnant to the  
 ‘whole spirit of the Gospel; and is for-  
 ‘bidden, as a most heinous sin, by that gos-  
 ‘pel.’---A regard to truth, on the other  
 hand, is the essential quality of a Christian,  
 and the essential character of the religion  
 which he professes.---God, in Scripture, is  
 stiled the “God of Truth;” to distinguish  
 him from the false, fictitious deities, of the  
 heathen world; and especially from Satan,  
 the first Father of Falsehood.---Christianity  
 is called Light, and Truth; in opposition to  
 the dark, corrupt superstitions, which reign-  
 ed before the coming of the Messiah.---The  
 Christian Morality is Truth, in the noblest  
 sense; because it is consonant to the reason  
 and relations of things; to the nature, to  
 the present and eternal welfare, of man.

Every Christian then, I say, who speaks  
 the truth as it ought to be spoken, and at  
 the same time acts agreeably to it;---every  
 such Christian lives in conformity to the  
 fundamental principles of his religion; and  
 will be sure to receive the Blessing, which  
 God who cannot lie, who is the everlasting  
 author and patron of truth, has promised to  
 confer upon him. To whom, only wise.

such deceit is directly repugnant to the  
whole spirit of the Gospel, and is for-  
bidden, as a most heinous sin, by that Gos-  
pel. A regard to truth, on the other  
hand, is the essential quality of a Christian,  
and the essential character of the religion  
which he professes. God in Scripture is  
called the "God of Truth," and distinguished  
from all other deities by the fitness of the  
name; and especially from Satan,  
the Father of Lies. Truth is opposition to  
the dark, corrupt, and deceptive, which reign-  
ed before the coming of the Messiah. The  
Christian's morality is founded on the  
truth; because it is contrary to the reason  
and relations of things; to the nature, to  
the present and eternal welfare of man.  
Every Christian then, I say, who speaks  
the truth, as it ought to be spoken, and at  
the time, and also agreeably to the  
such Christian duty, is ever ready to the  
fundamental principles of his religion; and  
will be found to be the blessing, which  
God who cannot lie, who is the ever-true  
and faithful of truth, has promised to  
those who are true. To whom, only who

SERMON XXXII.

Our Lord's immediate view in the text was, to give his Disciples, as well as the Jews at large, a right notion of himself, and his doctrine; to assure them, that he by no means (as his enemies might maliciously insinuate) denied the truth and divinity of the Scriptures; but, quite the reverse, to confirm and verify the Writings of the Old Testament; to explain and improve, to state and perfect the religion of Moses; and, finally, the Law, which Christ here says, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

## S E R M O N XXIV.

MATTHEW V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

**T**HESE words are taken from our blessed Master's first public discourse recorded in the New Testament, and usually called his 'Sermon on the Mount'. Wherein he has delivered so excellent a summary of the Religion, which he came to establish; of the duties incumbent upon us, towards our Maker and each other.

Our



Our Lord's immediate view in the text, was, to give his Disciples, as well as the Jews at large, a right notion of himself, and his doctrine; to assure them, that he by no means (as his enemies might maliciously insinuate) denied the truth and divinity of their law, or meant to contradict their Sacred Scriptures; but, quite the reverse, to confirm and verify the Writings of the Old Testament; to explain and improve, to enlarge and perfect, the religion of Moses.

By the law, which Christ here says, "He came not to destroy;" we must principally, though not solely, understand the moral part of the Jewish Law. For, as to the ceremonial part, of sacrifices, and the like; this received its completion, was to cease of course and by God's own appointment, now the fulness of time was come, under the new and superior dispensation of the Gospel. This therefore he may, in some sense, be said to have destroyed, or put an end to. Whereas the moral law, is of perpetual, of unchangeable, obligation: And neither Christ, nor any other Divine Teacher, could ever possibly entertain a thought, of repealing a single line of it!

Besides;

Besides; our Savior, in the remainder of this chapter, confines himself entirely to instances of moral duty. Whence it is manifest, that these are the grand articles, which He here says he was come to fulfil.

It is concerning moral precepts only he can be conceived to require, that "Our Righteousness should exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees;" who were notoriously exact in ceremonial matters, even to a fault. Concerning these only, he could say, that "whosoever should break the least of them, and teach others to do so, should be least in the Kingdom of Heaven."

That this is the capital sense of the word Law, in the place before us; will further appear, from sundry passages in the New Testament.---Thus our Savior tells us, in the twenty-second chapter of this same Gospel, that "the whole Law is summed up in these two points; the loving God with all our hearts, and the loving our neighbor as ourselves:" By which he means the whole moral law, comprehending our several duties to God and man.---To the same effect St. Paul declares in the epistle to the  
Romans,

Romans, that "He who loveth another, hath fulfilled the law : " That is, the moral law ; so far as it respects our behavior to each other. --- And again, in his epistle to the Galatians ; " the whole law," says he, " is fulfilled in one word, even in this ; " thou shalt love thy neighbor, as thyself : " where he undoubtedly intends the second table of the moral law, injoining social, or relative, duties.

By the Prophets, which our Lord says he came to fulfil ; we must understand the predictions of future events, which are found throughout the prophetic books in the Old Testament ; such of those predictions, I mean, as relate to himself ; to his person, character, office, and kingdom.

Thus, then, the purport of the text will be ; that ' Christ came, more fully to enforce the moral law of Moses ; to give his ritual law, its proper completion ; and to verify what had been foretold concerning himself, by the Jewish Prophets.'

In order therefore to confirm this declaration of our Savior, I shall, I, shew you from his own conduct, that he really designed, not to destroy, but to fulfil, both the Law  
and



and the Prophets. II. I will consider how, and in what manner, he has actually fulfilled them. III. I shall draw such inferences from the two foregoing heads, as may help you to understand Christianity, and to practise it.

I. Then, If we look into our Lord's conduct, with a view to this matter; we shall find him so far from attempting to subvert the Law or the Prophets, that he highly extols them on all occasions, as coming from God, and containing a Revelation of the Divine Will. When he lays down that incomparable rule of right, "the doing to others, as we would be done by;" he recommends the observance of it from this very argument, that "It is agreeable to what was taught in the Law and the Prophets." "All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: For this is the Law, and the Prophets." This is the substance of what they deliver, 'concerning the duty of man to man.' So when one of the scribes, hoping to perplex him, insidiously asked him, "which was the



“the great Commandment in the Law;” he answers directly, and plainly: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul. This is the first, the great, Commandment: And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbor, as thyself. On these two Commandments, depend all the Law and the Prophets.” As much as to say: “Whatever is enjoined in your Scriptures, is built upon one of these two fundamental precepts. Whatever your inspired teachers caution, admonish, or prescribe to be done, is reducible to them. All your piety to God, all your virtue to men, is nothing but the fruit of a sincere regard, for your Creator, and your fellow-creature.”

2. What can be stronger expressions of a zealous attachment to the Law, than the Text itself, and the verses that follow it? “Think not that I come to destroy the Law. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments,

"mandments, and shall teach men so; he  
 "shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven.  
 "But whosoever shall teach and do them,  
 "the same shall be great in the Kingdom of  
 "Heaven." These are not the words of  
 one, who wanted to bring the law into con-  
 tempt; or to raise a spirit of rebellion against  
 it, among the people; but of one, who was  
 endeavoring to engage them in the practice  
 of every thing that is good, pious, and  
 praise-worthy.

3. It is evident moreover, that our Lord  
 proved and supported his own Doctrine, by  
 the Law, and the Prophets. He grounded  
 his Religion upon them, constantly referred  
 to them for the truth of it. Thus, after  
 his Crucifixion, he says to his Disciples;  
 "these are the words, which I spake unto  
 "you, while I was yet with you; that all  
 "things must be fulfilled, which are writ-  
 "ten in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets,  
 "and in the Psalms, concerning me."  
 Especially, with regard to the Resurrection  
 itself, he tells them; "thus it is written;  
 "And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and  
 "to rise from the dead on the third day."

So, in his debates with the Jews, his argu-  
 VOL. I. E c ment

ment was the same: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: And they are they, which testify of Me."

4. Lastly, what is more than all the rest, our Savior most punctually kept the law himself, and acted according to it in every particular; not only to the moral, but even to the ceremonial, part of it. Hence he is said by St. Paul, "to have been made under the law:" That is, to have been subject to all the precepts, rules, and forms of it; or to have lived in compliance with every thing enjoined by it. He was under the ceremonial law, as a Jew, of the seed of Abraham: He was under the moral law, as a truly moral and virtuous man.

Respecting the latter, he challenges his enemies themselves, to produce an instance, wherein he had transgressed it. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" With regard to the former, his being circumcised on the eighth day, his condescending to be baptized by John the Baptist, his observing their Sabbath, their Passover, and other

other Festivals, are ample proofs of his submission and conformity.

He then, I say, who so exactly kept the whole Law; who declared the Prophets to be sent from God, defended and confirmed his Doctrine by them; He, in short, who paid so much honor to what was really the institution or Religion of Moses; could have no design to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them. After what manner he did this, it is time we should inquire.

II. First, therefore, let us consider the Moral Law; as being the most important branch of the Jewish, as well as of every other religious system. And if we can shew that Christ has improved the rules of moral duty, contained in the said law; that he has more fully explained, or enlarged, their meaning; that he has freed them from ignorant, or wilful, misinterpretations;—he must then be allowed to have fulfilled it, in the best, the noblest, sense. Let us, accordingly, examine the instances we meet with, in this fifth chapter of St. Matthew; From which alone it will abundantly appear,

E c 2      how



‘ how much Christ has done, towards ex-  
 ‘ alting and perfecting the Mosaic law.’

1. If the law, for example, prohibited and punished the actual commission of murder; our Lord has laid the ax to the root of the tree. He has suppressed it, in the very heart. He does not permit the indulgence of any rash or causeless anger, against our neighbor. “Ye have heard, that it was  
 “said by them of old time, thou shalt not  
 “kill: And whosoever shall kill, shall be  
 “in danger of the judgment. But I say  
 “unto you, that whosoever is angry with  
 “his brother without cause, shall be in  
 “danger of the judgment.”

2. If Moses condemned real acts of adultery, and uncleanness; the more refined morality of the Gospel, obliges us to govern our thoughts, and desires. It condemns all impurity, in the mind itself; the seat and source of adultery, as of every other wickedness.

3. In the matter of divorces, the law, but especially the Jews by their loose comments upon it, suffered men to turn off their wives, on any frivolous dispute, or ill-natured

natured pretence. But our Lord puts a stop, to such an arbitrary, such a libertine, practice; confining this separation, to the single and adequate case of incontinence. "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, did indeed grant you this lewd indulgence. But he who created mankind at the beginning, created them male and female; and intended they should preserve that union inviolate till death. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

4. Did the law allow retaliation, of evil for evil; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth? Christ has cut off all occasions of quarrel and contention. He has commanded Christians to pass over small affronts and injuries, rather than proceed to acts of revenge, which hardly ever fail of opening the way to great ones.

5. If the law forbad false-swearing, or perjury; our Lord has likewise forbidden the same: And has moreover solemnly warned us against that, which is the common inlet to wilful, deliberate, perjury; a wanton calling upon God; on trifling occasions; all daring abuse and profanation of his Sa-

cred Name. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not  
 "forswear thyself. But I say unto you, swear not at all" (rashly, or needlessly) "neither by Heaven, nor by the earth, nor by  
 "any other oath. But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for what  
 "soever is more than these" (all violent, extravagant, protestation) "cometh of evil."

6. The law (or rather, as in the business of divorces, the Jews' perversion of it) permitted a man to hate his enemy; and required him to love his friends only. But our great moralist has set this affair above all doubt. He has commanded us to extend our virtue beyond the narrow limits of private interest; to have universal benevolence, towards mankind; to imitate the unbounded goodness of God, who diffuses his blessings, not only among the virtuous, but among the wicked themselves; not only among those that serve, but even among those who are continually disobeying, him.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. "But I say unto you, love your  
 "enemies; bless them that curse you; do  
 "good

“good to them that hate you; and pray  
 “for them that persecute you: That ye  
 “may be the children of your Father, who is  
 “in Heaven: For he maketh his sun to rise  
 “on the evil, and on the good: He sendeth  
 “rain on the just, and on the unjust. Be  
 “ye therefore merciful, as your Father also  
 “is merciful.”

I cannot proceed till I have requested you to observe, ‘what infinite weight there is in this last precept, and particularly in the example by which our Lord enforces it.’ For let us reflect a moment! The all-perfect God bears long with our repeated transgressions against him; is always ready to pardon us, if we will repent, and forsake them. He supplies us with the good things, which we abuse to wicked purposes. He feeds the mouth, that blasphemeth his name; preserves the life and strength, that are wasted to his dishonor.

How then can we, the very best of whom are sinners, refuse to shew compassion to sinners like ourselves? How can we be implacable to the faults of others, who cannot but be conscious how much we ourselves deserve to be punished? In one short word.



If we will not forgive one another, what impudence is it to expect that God will forgive Us!

7. There is an instance, not mentioned in this chapter, but often elsewhere; in which Christ has greatly improved the Mo-  
saic Law; or at least has greatly amended the sense, wherein the Jews understood and practised it. The instance I mean, is the observance of the Sabbath: Which, though a positive institution, is yet essentially connected with the moral law.

Because God had said, "remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day; in it thou shalt do no manner of work;" the hypocritical Pharisees, and Jewish Rabbins, held it unlawful, even to attend the sick, or to cure the lame, on the Sabbath Day. But the Son of God, both in his mind and his doctrine, was inexpressibly superior to such low superstition.

"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day, or to do evil? What Man of you, having a sheep or an ox fallen into a pit, will be foolish enough, or barbarous enough, to let the creature perish there, because it happens to be the Sabbath Day?"

"The

41 The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." By so familiar, yet so forcible an argument, has our Master settled this important point.

The Sabbath is to be kept holy from all works, that can as well or better be done, on ordinary days. But cases of urgent necessity, admit no law. And good works that require immediate execution, it is not barely innocent, but it is our strict duty to do, even on the Sabbath day.

Thus has Christ, in the cases named above, and in the whole tenor of his preaching, fulfilled, or compleated, the Moral Law. He has supplied its several defects; which either arose from the misinterpretations of the Jews, or under which Moses had designedly left it, in compliance with their untoward, untractable, spirit. Beside this, he has also enriched it with new, more generous, more sublime precepts; which Moses himself had not enjoined.

8. And here let me add, what is by no means foreign from the subject before us; that "As Christ, by his own personal precepts, has exceedingly improved upon the Moral Law of Moses; so have all his Apostles

Apostles after him:—Who faithfully trode, in their Leader's steps; and, throughout all their epistles, have delivered the purest, yet at the same time the plainest morality, that hearers can receive, or teachers can prescribe. Nay (which you may think somewhat strange) the very excellency of their own as well as of their Master's moral doctrine, has often been raised into an objection against it; as if it were 'too chaste, too holy, for so frail and passionate a creature as man, to put in practice.' But to return.

9. Our Lord has not merely fulfilled the Moral, but likewise the Ceremonial Law of Moses; so far as it contained any thing, that was figurative of him, or terminated in him. Let me produce one or two examples, that may serve for all.

Their sacrifices, by which the Jews, according to God's own appointment, imperfectly atoned for their offences against him; were doubtless a Figure of the Great Sacrifice of Christ; which has effectually taken away the sins of all men, who sincerely repent.

So again, their Passover, which God instituted

stituted as a memorial of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, and of their admission into the land of promise, was clearly a type of the Christian Sacrament ; in which We commemorate our deliverance from the slavery of Sin, from the dominion of Death ; and our promised Admission into the Heavenly Canaan.

I have now, I hope, sufficiently considered how Christ has fulfilled, or brought to its intended perfection, the Mosaic Law ; in its two grand divisions, of the ritual, and the moral law.

To shew you how he has fulfilled the Prophets, or proved himself to be that illustrious Person, whose coming and office those Prophets had foretold ; together with the useful reflections, that will naturally arise from the text thus explained ; would exceed the limits of a single discourse, and must be postponed till our next meeting.

To God, only wise.



figured as a memorial of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, and of their admission into the land of promise, was clearly a type of the Christian sacrament, in which we commemorate our deliverance from the slavery of sin, from the dominion of Death, and our promised Admission into the Heavenly Canaan. I have now, I hope, sufficiently considered how Christ has fulfilled, or brought to its intended perfection, the Mosaic Law, in its two grand divisions, of the ritual, and the moral law.

To show you how he has fulfilled the Prophecy, or proved himself to be that illustrious Person, whose coming and office those Prophecies had foretold, together with the other reflections, that will naturally arise from the text, thus explained, would exceed the limits of a single discourse; and I must be postponed till our next meeting.

I have shewn you also, in several important instances, that he has greatly improved the Moral Law of Moses; that his moral doctrine in general, is superior to that which was delivered in the Mosaic Revelation.

## S E R M O N XXV.

In this part of all tenets, Christ has fulfilled the capital branch of the ancient Law. As to the inferior, or ceremonial branch; he has fulfilled that likewise; has given it its proper completion; by accomplishing, in his own person, all the sacrifices which were figurative of him, or relative to him: As in the instances of their sacrifices; and of

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

I HAVE already shewn you, from a clear view of our Savior's conduct, that he neither came to destroy, nor intended to destroy, either the Law, or the Prophets; but, on the contrary, uniformly paid all due regard to both; as proceeding from God, and founded upon the same Divine Authority to which he himself laid claim.

I have

I have shewn you also, in several important instances, that he has greatly improved the Moral Law of Moses; that his moral doctrine in general, is superior to that which was delivered in the Mosaic Religion.

In this best of all senses, Christ has fulfilled the capital branch of the ancient Law. As to the inferior, or ceremonial branch; he has fulfilled that likewise; has given it, its proper completion; by accomplishing, in his own person, all parts of it, which were figurative of him, or relative to him: As in the instances of their Sacrifices; and of their solemn Festival, the Passover.

II, I am now to finish the second general head, by inquiring, how our Lord has fulfilled the Prophets; and, III, to conclude with a practical application of the whole.

But, before I enter upon these points; let me remark, for your more fully understanding the scope of the text; that 'our Savior speaks here of the Jewish Law, entirely in a religious light.' With any civil, or political law (merely as such) Christ had no concern; either to destroy, or to fulfil, it.

it. In such matters, as he himself expressly asserts, "He was no judge, or divider, among them." The whole civil polity of the Jews, was finally subverted, within half a century after our Lord's death; when, the Romans sacked Jerusalem, as a just judgment from God upon its inhabitants, for their incorrigible wickedness and infidelity.

Let me also mention, what I forgot to take notice of, in my former discourse; and that is, 'how Christ has fulfilled the Ceremonial Law, or brought it to its intended conclusion, in the grand affair of Circumcision.'

Circumcision was instituted by Almighty God, as a token of the Covenant he made with Abraham, to take his posterity, the Israelites, for a peculiar people; till the days of the Messiah, the promised seed. It was likewise the general mark of distinction, between the Jews, as God's select people, and the Heathen or Gentile nations.

But, the very purpose of Christ's coming was, to establish a new, a more extensive, Covenant; to break down the partition-wall;



will, to remove all distinction, between Jew and Gentile. Consequently any mark of such distinction, remaining under the Gospel, must be highly improper, as well as unnecessary. In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision. There is neither Jew, nor Greek, neither Barbarian, Scythian, Bond, nor Free. But Faith, that worketh by Love, is the Religion of every Christian.

II. These preliminaries being settled, let us proceed to examine, in what manner our Savior has fulfilled the Prophets, 'no less than the Law.'

There cannot be a dispute, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament, frequently mention an extraordinary Person, whom God, in his appointed time, would send into the world: Who was to be an eminent Prophet, and teacher of Righteousness: to enlarge the Covenant between God and man, as I hinted just now: To propagate the knowledge of him, among mankind: To declare his will, among the Heathen nations; to enlighten their minds, to instruct them in his true worship and service.

These

These Scriptures set forth this same Person, under the stile of a Mighty Prince, ordained by God to rule over his people : To erect a Spiritual, everlasting Kingdom, over all nations : To deliver them, from the power of darkness : To be their Savior, and Redeemer : To re-instate them in their original subjection, to the One Universal Lord.

He is pointed out elsewhere, as a Supreme High Priest ; who was to intercede with God, for the sins of mankind ; to make reconciliation for their transgressions, to atone for their iniquities.

Beside these general accounts of this illustrious Prophet, the Scriptures enter into a more minute description of him. They specify the time, at which he would appear in the world ; the singular manner, and the place, of his birth ; the circumstances of his person, and family ; his external condition of life ; the humility of his aspect ; the reception he would meet with, from his countrymen, the Jews ; the great things he was to do, and to suffer, in the course of his ministry, here upon earth.

It would be needless to quote the words of these several prophecies, of which I have

given you the full sense. They are all extant, in the different books of the Old Testament. They were universally acknowledged, among the Jews; were firmly believed, though grossly misunderstood, by them; and actually caused a very general expectation, that 'A distinguished Person, 'under the title of Messiah, would one day 'arise in their own nation.' Of which expectation express notice is taken, not only by the Scripture-writers, but by their own famous author Josephus; and even by the Roman historians of that period: Who further inform us, that 'this persuasion had 'spread itself beyond Judea, into many of the neighboring countries.'

Now of all these Prophecies, Jesus of Nazareth is the object. He it is, concerning whom they were written, or spoken; and in whom they were accomplished. He alone has answered these representations. He is the only teacher, that ever yet appeared, in whom these several qualities were found; or the design and success of whose doctrine, have verified these predictions.

Many others indeed, taking advantage of the popular expectation, pretended to be the  
long-

long-looked-for Redeemer of Israel; and stiled themselves Messiahs, or special Messengers of God. But they all presently betrayed themselves, to be arrant deceivers. Their projects quickly came to an end, and were never heard of more. They wanted both the internal, and the outward marks, of a genuine Prophet.

Whereas our Lord has supported his claim to the dignity of Messiah, by the general conformity of his character, to the Scriptures above-mentioned: Particularly, by the numerous miracles he wrought, before multitudes of people; in Synagogues, and places of public resort, where all fraud was impossible: By the beneficial nature and tendency of what he taught: By the unspotted purity of his life and conversation: By the incomparable wisdom of his conduct, both to the Jews, and to his own Disciples: By his being flagitiously condemned, to die the death of a malefactor; as the Prophet Isaiah had precisely described: By his Resurrection from that death, of which various persons were repeatedly witnesses: By the miraculous powers, which accompanied his Apostles afterwards:

By



By the irresistible progress which his Religion, through these means, made in the world, against all opposition, both from prejudice, and persecution: By its having continued in veneration for so many centuries, and stood the test of so many ages.

Here I might add, as a separate proof that our Lord is the Messiah, foretold by the ancient Prophets; I might add, I say, the predictions, which both he himself and his Apostles delivered: Concerning the particular manner of his death, which he perfectly foresaw: Concerning the dispersion of the Jewish people, with the utter downfall of their temple and city: Concerning the false Christs that would arise, as they did in great numbers, between the time of his death and the destruction of Jerusalem: Concerning the effects that would attend his own Religion, when its first preachers had left the world; the different corruptions, that would insinuate, and mix themselves with it; the superstition and tyranny, that would prevail, in the Christian Church; especially, the grand superstition, the grand apostacy from the faith---that “man of sin, who was to be revealed; that son of perdition: who would exalt himself, above  
“ all

"all that is called God; who would forbid  
 "men to marry, and command them to ab-  
 "stain from meats which God has created to  
 "be received with thanksgiving; whose  
 "Religion would abound in lying won-  
 "ders, in all the deceiveableness of un-  
 "righteousness."

These things we know they predicted;  
 and we likewise know, we have seen, that  
 their predictions are accomplished. Which,  
 I say again, is a fresh, a distinct argument,  
 that they themselves were Prophets, in-  
 fluenced and inspired by the Spirit of God.  
 Consequently, they were upright men: All  
 their other pretensions were just, and well-  
 grounded: Or they were in fact, what they  
 professed and affirmed themselves to be.

The same truth, that 'Jesus is the Mes-  
 'siah promised in the Old Testament,' will  
 appear from another corroborating evidence  
 ---from the miracles which he and his  
 Apostles performed: To which I referred  
 just now, and about which I beg your leave  
 to say something further.

If these miracles were real, as the very  
 spectators never denied; the persons that  
 wrought them, must do it under the direc-

tion, or authority, of God; and must therefore be countenanced, must be commissioned, by him. If so, they could not be impostors; which their admirable doctrine, alone, demonstrates: They could not pretend to fulfil Prophecies, that bore no relation to them; nor be concerned in any other knavish forgery, to delude the people.

I lay it down here as a maxim, of which I shall not attempt to offer any proof, because I am sure it wants none; that 'no Deceiver, since the world began, ever preached a regular course of pure morality: much less did he confirm it, from time to time, by a series of miracles.' Both which were done by our blessed Master and his Apostles.

As the result, then, of what has passed; and that you may the better remember it; I shall sum up the reasons, which manifest our Savior to be God's great and last Prophet, pointed at in the writings of his inferior, preceding ones, into these four articles.

1. The correspondence of his character, with the descriptions given by those Prophets; to which descriptions no character, but

but his own, ever answered, or ever came near them.

2. The Prophecies, delivered by himself, and his principal disciples; which related to signal, public, events; and have all, long since, notoriously come to pass.

3. The morality, which he, and his first followers, uniformly preached; which they have left as a Blessing, to succeeding ages; and which, in proportion as it is practised, is confessedly useful to mankind; beyond that of Moses, or any other ancient Moralists.

4. The supernatural works of Divine Power, with which they consummated what they taught; which were wrought, in open day; before the eyes of a set of men, instigated by every selfish principle, by every worldly passion, to discredit and disprove them.

If you inquire, more particularly, 'whence the invincible stubbornness of these original adversaries of the Gospel, took its rise; why did they, or how could they, withstand such manifold conviction;' it is not my business to resolve this question, now: And I have accounted for their infidelity, as



far as it can be accounted for, on other occasions. Let it suffice at present, that I repeat the charge brought against them to their faces, by the first Christian Martyr, St. Stephen. “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost! As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the Prophets did not your fathers persecute? They slew the men, that shewed before the coming of the Just one; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers! Ye have received the Law by the ministration of Angels, and have not kept it!” Severe as this accusation may seem, it is justified, with very few exceptions, by the whole history of their behavior; from their departure out of Egypt, to their final dissolution.

Thus I have given you the best explanation I can, of the Text; by shewing you, both in what sense our Lord intended to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, and in what manner he actually has fulfilled them.

III. The conclusion shall consist, as it ought, in a suitable application of the whole to ourselves.

I, Then.

1. Then, You learn, from this and my foregoing Sermon, 'how far we are concerned with the Jewish Religion; or with the Law of Moses, as it lies in the Bible: Under what view we should consider it, with regard to Christians: What use in short we should make of it, and in what instances we are bound to observe it.'

You will see, by recollecting what I have said, that 'it is only the moral law of Moses, only the moral precepts of his religion, with which we have any connection.' These, indeed, are still obligatory upon all Christians, upon all mankind: Because the matters, which they contain, respect all men equally, have the same force in all times and nations.

Such is the doctrine of the unity of God, his spiritual nature, and universal government: the solemn prohibition of Idolatry, or image-worship: the strict injunction to avoid perjury, and to reverence the sacred name of Jehovah: The excellent institution of the Sabbath; or a day set apart for Divine Worship, for mens instruction in piety and righteousness: Which make the  
four

four Commandments, in the first table of the Moral Law.

Such, again, are the six Commandments, that compose the second table; and teach the duties we owe, to our parents, to our neighbor at large.

Beside these stated precepts, the books of Moses abound with noble exhortations, occasionally given by him to the Jews; to love and fear their common Creator, to continue steadfast in their faith and obedience to him, to live in peace and good-will with one another. In all which exhortations, We are interested, at least as much, or more than they.

But the rest of their law, was adapted entirely to their particular species of government. God designed it for them only, in their peculiar situation. And, with respect to their religious Rites, such as Circumcision, their Festivals, their Sacrifices; these were either absolutely superseded by the Gospel, or, as I have frequently remarked, received their destined end and accomplishment in it.

Thus are we to look upon the law, in the  
Old

Old Testament : with this view we are to read, and to study it. It is still, and for ever, a law to us ; so far as it lays down many important rules for our behavior, both to God and man ; which are of indispensable necessity to Christians, to every human creature ; they indeed are the basis, the ground-work, of Christianity itself. For it is Judaism that introduced those elements of true religion, which the Gospel has brought to maturity and perfection.

The same observation may be extended to the Psalms of David, to the Proverbs of Solomon, and to the other moral books in the Bible : Where you will find such sentiments of the Deity, such maxims of life and manners, as may be read with pleasure, and with benefit too, by every serious Christian.

2. If you reflect on this subject, you will perceive another singular advantage, which Christians derive from the Jewish Scriptures ; namely, from the Writings of their Prophets ; who foretold the coming of Christ, with the principal transactions of his life.

These



These Prophecies, as our Lord has verified them, are one incontestable evidence, in behalf of his religion. Therefore both he himself and his Apostles, constantly appealed to them; in all they did, or taught. Upon them, as its first foundation, the Gospel is built. No one could be the real Messiah, who did not fulfil them. And as our Savior alone has done this, he alone has a right to that title: To him it belongs, and to no other.

These Prophecies, then, are a standing testimony, in favor of Christianity. Consequently the books, wherein such prophecies appear, are of the utmost value to Christian people. They are a treasure of Divine Knowledge. They open to us the grand scheme of Providence, in the Christian dispensation; and lead us to admire that unbounded wisdom, whose eye can reach the most remote events. They demonstrate that the Gospel came from Heaven, and is a Revelation of the Divine Will: That all its doctrines are true, and have the God of truth for their author: That whatever it commands, must be obeyed: That whatever it promises

promises to virtuous, or denounces against wicked men, will certainly be performed. For, though Heaven and Earth may pass away; the Word of God abideth sure, and can never fail!

3. Wherefore, lastly. Since such is the nature, such the evidence, of Christ's Religion; let us cherish in our minds, a just esteem of it, and be sincerely thankful to God for it. Above all, let us take heed to live, in conformity to it; in a conscientious practice of the duties it enjoins. Let us carefully shun, what it declares to be evil: Let us zealously pursue, what it recommends, as holy and good. Let our belief of the great points so repeatedly mentioned, make itself appear, by its influence upon our actions; by producing in us its proper fruits. Let us not, through our wilful crimes, defeat the gracious purposes of Christianity; or render of no effect, what Christ has done and suffered for us. To say the whole, at once. Let us fear God, and keep his Commandments: For this is the sum of all wholesome doctrine: This is the end of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.

After

After the numerous debates that have been raised, the still more numerous discourses that have been written or preached, about Religion; and the thousand forms, under which it has been exhibited; the real thing lies in a short compass. It is no intricate, or far-fetched, matter; but is easily understood, and always near at hand. "It is not in Heaven; that ye should say, who shall ascend, and bring it down to us from above? It is not in the deep; that ye should say, who shall descend, and bring it up to us from beneath? But it is in your own hearts, in your own breasts." God, by reason or revelation, has planted it within you: And ye have nothing to do, but to call it forth, into action. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before him?" Yet, in spite of the plainest instruction, that God himself can give; obstinate prejudices will blind mens minds, and corrupt their judgments: Sinful passions will hinder them from seeing, but especially from obeying,

ing, the undeniable rules, both of interest, and of duty.

This effect they had, upon the Jews of old ; who rejected, and crucified, the Lord of life. The like effect they still continue to produce, in many of us, called Christians ; who crucify that same Savior afresh, by a daily violation of his clearest, most equitable, commands.

To the King Eternal.



SERMON XXV

ing the ancient rule, both of inward  
and outward duty. They have upon the laws of  
old, who rested, and trusted the Lord  
of life. The like effect they still continue  
to produce, in many of us, called Chris-  
tians, who exactly that same Savior strictly  
by a daily violation of his clearest, most  
obvious commands.

To the King's Journal.  
The present state of the world is  
such, that it is necessary for every  
man to be a Christian, and to be  
a Christian, is to be a Christian.  
The present state of the world is  
such, that it is necessary for every  
man to be a Christian, and to be  
a Christian, is to be a Christian.  
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SERMON XXV

Paul, therefore most rightly observes  
 that what is recorded concerning them  
 concerning their behavior towards God  
 and his Ministers or Judgments upon them  
 is written for a warning to us -- that by

# S E R M O N XXVI.

penitence, and improve the Blessings of  
 Heaven.

The Apostles, having received the  
 long train of Divine Favours, conferred on  
 the Jewish people, leave the words of the

ISAIAH LXIII. 10.

*But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit:  
 therefore he was turned to be their Enemy;  
 and he Fought against them.*

**I**T is one of the wise methods of Provi-  
 dence in the government of the world,  
 to instruct every generation of men, by way  
 of caution and example, from the vices as  
 well as the virtues of those who have lived  
 before them. And this can no where be so  
 plainly learnt for the benefit of Christians,  
 as in the instance of that nation, who were  
 once the elect, peculiar, Church of God.

St. Paul therefore most rightly observes, that 'what is recorded concerning Them, ' concerning their behavior towards God, ' and his Mercies or Judgments upon them, ' is written for a warning to Us'---that, by applying it to ourselves, we may avoid the punishments, and improve the Blessings, of Heaven.

The Prophet Isaiah, having remarked the long train of Divine Favors, conferred on the Jewish people, leaves the words of the text, as a lesson of admonition, to all the succeeding ages of God's Church. " He was " their Savior : In all their affliction, he was " afflicted ; and the Angel of his Presence " saved them. In his love, and in his pity, " he redeemed them. He bare them, and " carried them, all the days of old. But " They," instead of humble thankfulness for these repeated mercies, " rebelled, and vex- " ed his Holy Spirit. Therefore he was " turned to be their enemy : And he fought " against them."

It makes no difference with regard to the main design of the text, whether by the Spirit of God, we suppose is meant the Supreme Being himself ; as the Spirit of a man,

denotes the man himself; or the distinct person of the Holy Spirit---that Divine, inspiring agent, by whose power the Prophets of old were actuated! By whose Sacred influence the Apostles were enabled to preach the Gospel; to work Miracles, and to write Records, for the propagation of the Christian Faith. Whichever way we take it, we shall naturally be led to consider, I, In what sense Almighty God, or the Holy Spirit, is said, by the Scripture-Writers, to be vexed; II, in what manner, in what particulars, men have formerly vexed him; and Christians may still be guilty of it; III, the exceeding great danger, as well as sinfulness, of so doing.

I, then. To be vexed, or disturbed, in mind, truly speaking, is incident only to frail, imperfect, creatures. To understand it literally of the Sovereign Creator, would be to entertain an idea, highly unworthy of him. His all-perfect mind can receive no addition of joy, from the obedience and welfare of his servants: Nor can their utmost wickedness or misery, give him uneasiness. His happiness is infinitely above the reach of sufl

ng Job

G g 2

ferings,



ferings, infinitely removed from all possibility of change.

God is pleased indeed in Scripture, to speak of himself, and his dispensations, in a way that is suited to Our apprehensions; by representing his Divine Nature, under images borrowed from our own; as the only method, whereby a due impressi<sup>on</sup> could possibly be made, upon such minds as ours.

Thus: Though seeing and hearing properly belong to bodily organs, and suppose the use of them; yet God, and his Spirit, are described, as having their eyes in every place; as hearing the prayers of the righteous, and the cries of the oppressed. Which can only signify, that 'God has an unlimited knowledge of things;' as being (though in a manner We can form no conception of) intimately present, throughout all space, and with all persons.

So also, the dealings, or actions, of the Supreme Governor towards us, are set forth under the same circumstances of emotion and passion, with which We are wont to act towards each other upon similar occasions. Thus, when God found that his gracious design

design in creating the race of men before the flood, was defeated by their wickedness; it is said, in the high eastern figure, that "it repented the Lord, he had made man; that it grieved him, at his heart." Thus, likewise: After all fit measures were in vain employed, for reforming those Antidiluvian Sinners, by the preaching, and good example, of Noah; it is expressed, as if the Spirit of God had been contending with them, to bring them to amendment: "My Spirit shall not alway Strive with Man." So, again: When it is said, Exodus the thirty-second, that "The Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to have done to his people;" this must not be taken for any passion, in the Divine Mind; but only for an alteration of God's dealing with them, or his pardoning them; not upon His Repentance, but upon the prospect of Theirs.

In the same sense should we interpret all other expressions (for there are many) of the like kind. And, in short, men vex or grieve the Holy Spirit; when, by neglecting to improve under his Heavenly assistance, they cause him to treat them in some such way, as

We are used to treat those, who slight, dis-  
please, or injure, us.

II. Let us now see, after what manner,  
and in what instances, mankind at large, but  
Christians particularly, have been, or are  
still, guilty of this Sin. First, how were  
the Heathens guilty of it? For it is certain,  
that the Holy Spirit was by no means want-  
ing, to the Gentile Nations. God did not  
leave himself without witnesses to them, of  
his Eternal Power and Godhead. The in-  
visible things of Him, from the Creation of  
the World, might always be clearly seen;  
being understood by the things that are  
Made.

But they "vexed this Spirit," or lost the  
guidance of this Divine light, by wilfully  
darkening their own minds: By unnatural  
vices and immoralities: By vain imagina-  
tions, and inhuman actions: By changing  
the truth of God, into a lie, and worship-  
ping the creature instead of the Creator,  
who is blessed for evermore. So that, as  
St. Paul says, they were without excuse.  
For which cause, God left them to their  
own depraved selves. He gave them up, to

W

their

their own vile affections, and reprobate minds. As to the Jews, They were guilty of this Sin, in a manner still more inexcusable. For They were a people, who had been saved by Miracles; conducted by a visible arm of Providence; enlightened by a law, revealed from Heaven itself. "To Them," says the same St. Paul, "pertained the Adoption, the Glory, and the Covenants; the service of God, and the promises. Theirs were the fathers; and from them, as concerning the flesh," or with respect to his human nature, "the Great Messiah himself was descended." Though blest with these high privileges, they revolted from their deliverer, to the worship of idols, that could not save. They grew dissatisfied, and rebellious, under the ceremonial part of their Religion; which God instituted on purpose to keep them clear of idolatries, that ruined the nations around them. Beside this, They shamefully broke their moral law; regardless of its sacred and social obligations. They rejected the admonitions, disobeyed the precepts, perverted the writings, and abused their



the persons, of their own inspired teachers.  
 --- Thus did they, in the worst degrees,  
 "vex and grieve that Holy Spirit," by  
 whose authority Moses acted: By whose Di-  
 vine impulse, their holy men preached; of-  
 ten forewarning them, what condition they  
 were in, and what would at length become  
 of them. *And it is not*  
 After this manner they behaved, in the  
 days of their Prophets. And when their  
 last, their Grand Prophet of all, their and  
 our Redeemer, was come amongst them; it  
 was a dreadful but just reproach, which was  
 thrown upon them, by the first Martyr to  
 his Gospel. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncir-  
 cumcised in heart and ears, ye do always  
 resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers  
 did, so do Ye. Which of the Prophets  
 have not your fathers persecuted? And  
 they have slain them, who shewed before  
 the coming of the Just One, of whom  
 Ye have been now the betrayers and mur-  
 derers. Ye have received the law, by the  
 disposition of Angels; and have not kept  
 it." *And he said unto them*  
 With regard to Christians, I heartily wish  
 a more agreeable account could be given of  
 their

their behavior. The Holy Spirit has not only conferred on Us the same gifts, as he did on the Jews; but has, by a series of even greater miracles, supported Christ's Religion in the world, against all the powers of Satan, against the united efforts of all his Ministers.

St. Paul tells the Hebrews, that "the antient Israelites could not enter into Their Canaan, because of unbelief." Not that they gave up all belief of God, or of his laws: But they were unmindful of those laws, and would not obey them.---I shall say nothing therefore concerning the speculative unbelievers of the present time. Our practical Infidels are by much the most numerous, and require our most serious attention. Truth will at last defend itself, and prevail. It has, in a great measure, done so already. But to stop a torrent of licentious practices, is a far more difficult, a far more extensive, undertaking.

Every violation, then, of the Divine Law, is vexing the Gracious Spirit, by which that law was delivered. Every indulgence of sinful passions, every habit of injustice or violence, is grieving, resisting, and banishing

ing the Heavenly Comforter from your souls.

Our blessed Lord, pronouncing sentence upon a wicked Christian, declares, in one place, that he shall have his portion with the Hypocrites: In another place it is, with the unbelievers: As if, according to His judgment, an infidel, and an immoral pretended believer, were ultimately the same thing. To speak freely—if there be any difference, it is all in favor of the Infidel; all against the sinful believer. The Infidel is supposed to have no taste of goodness, no sense of religious obligations, no feeling of the motions of the Good Spirit. But for Him who sees and confesses the light of the Gospel, to live in direct opposition to the evidences of his own mind, as well as to those of the Divine Spirit; This is, in a true, but sad acceptation, to ‘Sin against that Holy Ghost.’

Mention indeed is made in Scripture, of a particular sin, committed by some particular persons; emphatically stiled “the sin against the Holy Ghost.” I mean, the sin of the Jewish Pharisees, in blaspheming our Savior’s Miracles, and ascribing them to evil

evil Spirits, or to an impious confederacy with the Prince of those Spirits. "This Fellow casteth out Devils, through Beelzebub, the chief of the Devils." Of which blasphemy, they never repented; and consequently rendered it incapable of forgiveness.

Now, though none of Us can possibly be guilty of this identical sin, because we see no Miracles performed, before our eyes; yet for us to sling contempt upon the precepts of that Religion, which these very Miracles were wrought to confirm, is, beyond all controversy, to sin against the same Spirit: And has this circumstance in common with the sin of the Pharisees, that, without repentance it will never be forgiven, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

Therefore let no timorous mind torment itself with groundless fears of its having sinned the peculiar sin against the Holy Ghost: But, at the same time, let us all most carefully shun every other heinous crime: Or we shall infallibly be reckoned among the number of those blasphemers, who sinned against their last remedy, and became unpardonable.

In



In what remains under this head, I beg you will consider, with how warm, with how earnest a concern, the Scriptures of the New Testament have set forth the several vices of mankind, as absolutely destroying all the good influences, all the gracious purposes, of the Holy Spirit.

They tell us, for example, that Christians are to be led by the Spirit of Truth. "For the Fruit of the Spirit," says the Apostle, "is in all Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth." But how sadly is this glorious end defeated, by false-speaking, slander, treachery, by every species of iniquity, in our dealings with each other!

Again, The same Spirit is given, to sanctify the bodies, as well as the minds, of Christian Believers. But how inconsistent with this blessing, are the intemperate desires, the unbridled luxuries, the soul debaucheries, of which some of us are guilty! "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Now, if any man defile the temple of God; Him shall God destroy."

Lastly: What can be the consequence of the

the profane discourse, of the indecent, lewd conversation, to which many persons accustom themselves; but an utter loss of all intercourse, with this great author of purity and virtue! "Let no corrupt communication," says the Apostle so often quoted, "proceed out of your mouth: Because" (as it follows in the next words) "this would be to Grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of Redemption."

III. Enough perhaps may have passed, concerning the manner of committing this Sin, to convince you of its malignity, and dreadful tendency.

Human vices, have the same general qualities; in every age, under every dispensation. Every sinful man offends as much against himself, as against his Creator. He as much debases and injures his own spirit, as he vexes the Spirit of God. While he sins against his duty, he sins against his happiness. While he gives an unrestrained liberty to his passions, he is gratifying the worst enemies he has; and to resist the dictates of his rational nature, is to resist the

Author

Author of that Nature.--All this holds true, of all profligate men whatsoever.

But in profligate Christians, there is an aggravation of guilt, proportioned to the superior light, knowledge, and grace, bestowed on Their Minds, by the Spiritual Religion of the Gospel. We have a teacher sent from Heaven, to instruct us in every duty: A Master, who lived those duties all over, in his own person; as our noblest encouragement to practise them: a Redeemer, who died for us: An Holy Spirit, sent likewise from above [as on this day] to comfort, support, and guide us.--Reflect therefore, I entreat you, what a weight of ingratitude each wilful crime must needs lay upon Our heads! Against what truth and evidence, against what love and mercy, all Our transgressions are committed!

But of the danger, and just punishment, of neglecting this Salvation, you may behold an example, eminently worth your notice, in the words I have chosen for the text, "So God was turned against his people" (the Jews) "to be their adversary: And "he fought against them."

God

God may be understood as an adversary to a people, or as fighting against them, when he only withdraws from them his paternal care; and resigns them up to the woful effects of their own vicious follies: Or when, moreover, he suffers them to fall under the superior power of other nations, as the instruments of his anger.

He is accordingly represented by the Psalmist, declaring thus of his ancient people: "But my people would not hear my voice, and Israel would not obey me. So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations."---And in truth this alone, was a punishment terrible enough! For what is the strength, or the short-sighted policy, of man; when destitute of the counsel, of the Providence and protection, of his Maker.

But, if we consider Almighty God, as not barely permitting, but as directing and employing, the powers of other nations, against a rebellious people; Then what a dreadful history do you read, of these un-toward Israelites! Often and long conquered, captivated, enslaved; and now, for more than sixteen hundred years past, thrown



thrown out of all national favor, broken, dispersed, and made the scorn of the whole earth! So that the threatening, denounced against their disobedience in God's Covenant with Solomon after the dedication of the temple, was punctually fulfilled. "But, "if ye keep not my commandments and "my Statutes, which I have set before you; "I will cut off Israel from the land which "I have given them: This house, which I "have hallowed for my name, will I cast "out of my sight. And Israel" (mark the following part of the sentence) "shall become a proverb, a by-word, among all "people."

What a warning then is here to all those who live in the spirit, if they take no conscientious heed to walk in the spirit! And if God spared not his own inheritance, whom he had chosen to himself out of all the kingdoms of the earth; how ought we to fear, lest he also spare not Us!---Had we no foreign enemies, that wished to disturb our peace, and to rob us of the free enjoyment of our Christian principles; it would be a heavy as well as just punishment, were we only delivered over to the natural  
 words consequences

consequences of the crimes, by which we are daily vexing the Holy Spirit. The miseries we should, in such a state, bring upon ourselves, are greater than I can easily describe, or You conceive. --- But should Almighty God, according to the course of his Providence hitherto seen in the world, give success to the arms of other nations against us, and make us a prey to the adversaries of our religion, no less than of our civil liberties. This would be attended with the loss of every thing, that is dear in a protestant country! And may our public repentance, and the Divine compassion, timely prevent it! That we may never feel the displeasure due to a people, by whom the duties of religion are far better understood than they could be by the Jews, but not a bit better regarded!

Lastly, however, and above all. Let each of you apply what has been said, to himself; in his own personal character. --- Whatever the Text speaks concerning the Jews, or God's punishments of them, as a nation; is most especially true concerning the Spiritual estate of every man here present. It is your highest interest, let it there-

fore be your care, not to partake in the guilt of the common vices of our country: That so you may escape the everlasting punishment which awaits them, after all earthly things shall have come to an end. And, in the mean time, call up all the aids of reason, of Scripture, of the Holy Spirit, to raise you above the contagious examples of a sinful age! Let it be your constant study, to recollect and reform the errors of your past life; to make the best use of the short, uncertain, remainder of it; and so to walk in the light, while you have the light, that neither temporal nor eternal darkness may ever come upon you!

To God, only, wise.

S E R M O N XXVII.

JAMES I. 19, 20.

*My beloved Brethren, let every man be swift to bear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.*

**S**T. James the Author of this epistle, as we learn from ancient ecclesiastical history, was sister's son to the Virgin Mary; and consequently kinsman, or cousin-german, to our blessed Savior; whose brother he is also called, by St. Paul; according to



the latitude, wherein the word brother is used in the Hebrew language.

He was likewise stiled James the Less, or James the Younger; to distinguish him from another Apostle of the same name, more advanced in years, and brother to St. John.

But, what is of much greater importance, he was a man of such sanctity of manners, and of so amiable a disposition, that he acquired, as well as merited, the title of James the Just, or James the Righteous. In consequence of which, he was chosen by the Apostles, to be Bishop of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem; where he resided, in that character; and from whence he sent this epistle to the Jewish converts who lived out of Judea, dispersed into different parts of the world; with a truly episcopal intention, of comforting them under their persecutions, improving them in the Christian morals, and confirming them in the Christian Faith.

Among all the admirable precepts, or exhortations, contained in this affectionate Letter, there are none perhaps more so, than those I have now read to you.---In treating upon which I shall,

I, Take

I, Take the three short rules he here prescribes, and give you an illustration of them, according to the order wherein they lie before us. After which I shall,

II, Particularly consider the argument, whereby he inforces the last of them. "For the wrath of man," says he, "worketh not the righteousness of God."

III, The third Head shall consist of a plain and practical application of what has passed upon the subject. Which application, I conceive to be the proper conclusion of all discourses spoken from this place.

I, Then. "Let every man be swift to hear." Let him be always ready to hearken to the doctrines, precepts, and duties, of Religion; as well as to the men, who are appointed to deliver them.---Let him be fair, candid, and impartial, in his judgment of the matters, which are laid before him.---Let him divest himself of the prejudices, but especially of the vicious passions, that either would hinder him from embracing, or would certainly cause him to misinterpret, the best instruction.---Let the truth of things, the edification of his own mind,

the favor of God, the blessings promised to good men in the Gospel, be his grand objects, and constantly direct him throughout all his inquiries. In fine. Let him be heartily desirous, to receive information; to understand, what Christianity requires of him; in order that he may carry it into due execution.---This is the first disposition, which the Text recommends, to every Disciple of Christ, to every hearer of his Gospel. And a most excellent disposition it is, for men in general, as well as for Christians in particular; as I shall have abundant occasion to remark afterwards.

Next, says the Apostle, "Let him be slow to speak. Let him not be fond of his own pre-conceived opinions; not forward to urge them, not obstinate in adhering to them.---Let him not be talkative, or ostentatiously full of words; but modest, and open to conviction, on which side so ever the truth may lie. A pert self-conceit, is one of the worst enemies, the mind can have. It darkens the understanding, corrupts the judgment, depraves the will! He that fancies himself already sufficiently wise, and  
qualified

qualified to dictate to others, stops his way to all further improvement in knowledge; and dies as ignorant, as he lived!

A docile temper, an ingenuous sense of their own deficiencies and defects, is necessary alike for all persons, who wish to become conversant with any species of learning; with any art, or science; with any subjects, human or Divine. The want of such a temper, where it produces no worse effects, never fails to make a man a prating, empty, coxcomb; a most disagreeable companion, to the people about him.

Turn your thoughts now, from such a character, to the great pattern of our lives, the great "Author and Finisher of our Faith." Who, though a perfect master of all virtues, never assumed to himself any, but the virtue of humility: The virtue, as he himself expresses it, of being "meek, and lowly in heart." Which ought consequently to be not only one, but the prime, ingredient; in the composition of every scholar of that Divine Instructor. "Learn of Me. For I am meek, and lowly in Heart."

The third qualification in a Disciple of



Christ, as here set down by St. James, and closely connected with the two foregoing ones, is; that "He be slow to wrath:" That he never be vehement, never furious, in maintaining his notions; never angry with his Brethren, for not concurring with him, or for differing in sentiment from him.

Such a proneness to wrath, is the highest, the most criminal, degree of self-conceit; destructive, above any, of the peace of mankind; setting them at eternal variance; and, instead of friends to the cause of truth, making them irreconcilable enemies to one another.

From this malignant spirit (to say nothing of the other unnumbered mischiefs created by it) have arisen all the religious squabbles, all the ill-natured controversial writings, that have currently passed in our own nation under the unchristian title of Polemical Divinity: All the fiery factions and heresies we read of, in other countries: all the persecutions, that have been mutually exercised by the pretended followers of the Holy Jesus; to the utter extinction,

not

not only of the reality, but of the very outward appearance, of Christianity.

Moreover. This advice of the good Apostle, beside it's being everlastingly needful for all Christians whatever, was peculiarly needful for the Jewish converts, to whom he was now writing: Many of whom discovered a strong affection for the ceremonial, and most insignificant parts, of the Mosaic law; which they not merely were loath to renounce; but which they strove to retain, with the intemperate heat, that ever distinguished a Jewish zealor.

II. The second point proposed, is; that we attend to the argument, by which St. James enforces this last precept. "Let every man," says he, "be slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the Righteousness of God."

In good truth, the wrath of man is so far from working the Righteousness of God, or any other Righteousness whatsoever; that it works all sorts of unrighteousness; both in the instances of Religion, just now mentioned; and in ten thousand more than I have time to mention, throughout all our worldly and social connections.

The

The wrath of God against men, executes justice upon them, for their own personal amendment; and for a warning to others: Whereas the wrath of men against one another, knows no bounds of justice; but often inflicts punishment, upon the most innocent; and always inflicts it upon the guilty, far beyond what they really deserve.

Again. Wrath, like pride, as the Son of Sirach ingeniously as well as judiciously observes, "was never made for man." It was never intended for him; can never properly belong to him, or appear with any propriety in him. The reason of which, is obvious: Namely, that 'We are all full of faults.' "In many things," says the author of my text, "We all offend. There is not," as the wisest of men will tell you, and as ye yourselves well know, "a just man upon earth, who doeth good, and sinneth not." So that, whenever one man is angry with another, you may safely pronounce, that 'one sinner is angry with another.' The inference speaks for itself -- that 'God only has a right to be angry, because he only is spotless and perfect.'

Hence it is, that the Gospel, with as  
 The much

much philosophy as piety, commands us, "never to avenge ourselves, but to give place unto wrath;" to "leave the avenging of our cause to that God, to whom alone vengeance belongeth;" who is the great power, against which all crimes whatsoever are committed; the power, which is ultimately offended by every sin, whereof men, or any other beings, can possibly be guilty.

I beg however you will observe, that I am not speaking here, about the execution of any civil laws, or about the legal punishment of those persons who transgress them. These laws, with the magistrates that enforce them, and the penalties annexed to the breach of them, are entirely out of the question. The laws of all well-ordered states, punish men, not from a principle of anger; but from motives of public utility, of absolute necessity; for the reformation of the offender himself; for the protection of other individuals; and for the safety of the whole community.

As St. James therefore does not mean to prohibit Governors, from discharging their office; so neither does he prohibit subjects, from



from defending their lawful rights, against the violence of lawless men. Nor does he forbid any persons who are injured by such men, to bring the offenders to the punishment decreed by the laws of their country.

The Gospel, as is clear to every creature who understands it, never interferes with the civil powers of any nation, or depreciates the authority of their laws. At the same time, it considers human conduct, not in a merely political, but in a moral and religious light. It charges all men, without distinction of rank or employment, to "fear God, and to love their neighbor;" to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;" Which is the universal law of human behavior; under whatever form of government you can suppose a man to live; in whatever situation, character, or capacity, you can view him.

In short, The wrath forbidden here in the Text, or any where else throughout the New Testament, as well as all that I have said upon the subject, relates solely to personal wrath; to anger, in the mind; to the hasty rage, or malicious resentment, of one man

man (that is, as I remarked just now, of  
 one sinners against another. of one man  
 shall dwell the longer upon this observation,  
 to suppress the cavils of those infidels, who  
 pretend to fancy, that 'the peaceable doc-  
 trine of Christianity, is detrimental to the  
 ' civil rights of mankind ;' that it would  
 have men tamely submit to all sorts of in-  
 justice, and that it will not suffer them to avail  
 themselves of the protection, or penal laws,  
 of human governments. In direct con-  
 tradiction to which whole idea, human Go-  
 vernors are expressly called by St. Paul, in  
 in his epistle to the Romans, "the mini-  
 sters of God, ordained by him to execute  
 " punishment upon them that do evil things."  
 The same St. Paul, in the same epistle, has  
 perfectly cleared up this point; and has  
 shewn you beyond all doubt, what is the  
 only species of wrath, which the Gospel  
 forbids. "Thou art inexcusable, O Man,  
 "whosoever thou art that judgest" (that art  
 censorious and severe, upon the faults of  
 mankind) "for wherein thou judgest ano-  
 "ther, thou condemnest thyself. For thou  
 "that judgest, doest the same things."  
 That is, you yourself are a sinner, in some  
 shape

shape or other, as well as the man, with whom you are so angry, and whom you are so ready to accuse. For which manifest reason, instead of persecuting him, or sitting in judgment upon him, you ought to pity him; to sympathize with him, and to correct yourself.

Exactly upon the same humane principle, this Apostle exhorts the elders of the Galatian Church: Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault; ye, who are spiritual, restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness; considering yourselves, lest Ye also be tempted.

Which exhortation of St. Paul, coincides entirely, as it ought to do, with the precepts of our Blessed Master: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

Now all this advice, as I laid before, is most evidently addressed to men, not barely in their political or civil, but in their moral and religious, characters; not barely as subjects of a human government, but as the creatures, servants, and subjects, of God.

Let

Let me only add, that those people, who seem afraid (the peaceable morality) of the Gospel should injure mens worldly interests, are requested to make themselves perfectly easy. For, if there was no other argument to quiet their fears; that peaceable doctrine, God knows, has never been practised enough in the world, to do any harm, or hardly any good.

III. The conclusion therefore, and the proper application of what has been said to illustrate the text, lies on the quite opposite side. Namely, that we should highly admire, and sincerely endeavor to attain, this Heavenly temper of Christianity; which would make us all, swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath,

If, without looking any further, we truly regarded the happiness, even of our present life; what could we wish for, or what can be imagined more conducive to that happiness, than to be uniformly governed, and to govern ourselves, by these amiable maxims? What fruits could spring from such a mode of government, but universal harmony in societies; universal contentment, and tranquillity, in every private breast?

On



On the other hand, what is the indubitable cause of all the confusion; in this contentious world; but that so many of us, reversing the Sacred advice given them in the Text, are slow to hear what is good; swift to propagate their own perverse notions; wrathful to overturn every thing, or person; that offers to withstand them, &c.

Hence come wars and bloodshed, between different nations; seditions and distractions, among the people of the same nation, throughout every division; every scene of life; in bodies politic, in cities, in villages, in neighbourhoods; in families &c.

Hence come secret enmities, open quarrels, malicious slander, scurrilous language, violent oaths, and bitter imprecations, betwixt man and man.

All these evils (for the reality of which I freely appeal to yourselves) the three short precepts in the text, as supported and enforced by the Apostle's argument, would infallibly put a stop to; or, rather, would never suffer them to exist. Such maladies could have no possible being, no beginning, if all men were "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Nor could any

thing possibly be the result of so excellent a conduct, but "the righteousness of God," and the everlasting welfare of men.

For the accomplishment of which most desirable ends, let every man among you, as far as his influence or his transactions extend, make the words of my text, the principles of his heart, and the general rules of his actual behavior. Every man living, knows and feels, that he has such a power over himself; if he will but conscientiously exert it. You have just the same liberty, to restrain, or subdue, your anger; as you have to indulge, and to inflame it.

I cannot finish this application of the subject, without recommending to your frequent reflection, the memorable words of King Solomon; which contain a doctrine, exactly similar to that in the text, and worthy of a princely philosopher; of a man, who thoroughly understood wherein true Greatness consists, and how sadly it is mistaken by the Grandees of this world. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city," Which, if

put into our modern and less simple stile of moralizing, would be thus expressed. 'The conquest of ourselves, is the most glorious of all victories: The dominion of reason over the passions, is the noblest empire upon earth.'

To God, only wise.

S E R M O N XXVIII.

# S E R M O N XXVIII.

JOHN x. 25.

*The Works that I do in my Father's Name,  
They bear Witness of Me.*

THESE words are part of our Savior's answer, to the unbelieving Jews; who, as you find in the preceding verse, came round about him, with their old inquiry; saying, "how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly!" To which our Lord replies, in the text; "I told you, and ye believed me not. The Works that I do in my Father's Name (under commission and authority



thority from God) "They bear Witness of Me."

By his works therefore, to which our Master here appeals for the solution of their doubts, we are to understand, not merely the good works, or the moral virtues, of his Life; but particularly the Miracles which he wrought, to prove himself the Messiah; to convince the world of his claim, to that divine office and character.---These are the works, concerning which he says to Philip in the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel, "Believe Me, Philip, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: Or else believe Me, for the very Works' sake."

Since both our Savior and his Apostles continually refer to the Miracles which they performed, as one grand evidence of the Religion they delivered to mankind; I purpose, in the following discourse,

I. To give you a short description of Miracles, in general.

II. To point out the peculiar qualities of the Miracles, wrought by our Lord, and his Apostles.

III. To consider the doctrines, which he himself, and those Apostles, taught.

IV. To

IV. To shew you, how these doctrines are confirmed by Miracles; how the works of Christ support what he preached; how they mutually inforce one another; and, both together, completely demonstrate the Divine Origin of that Religion which We profess, and which He first published to the world.

I, Then. A Miracle is an extraordinary act or event, deviating from the common course of things, from the common order of Providence; and absolutely beyond the power of Man, not only to do it, but even to conceive how it can be done. It is consequently effected, if not immediately by Almighty God himself, by some Spiritual Agent, acting under his direction, or at least with his permission, and having power to over-rule the usual laws of nature, so far as concerns the Miracle performed. Man, utterly incapable of working it himself, is nothing more than the instrument, by which it Seems to be wrought.

Under this description come the wonders displayed by Moses, for the correction of Pharaoh, and the Egyptians: Of which you read, from the sixth to the fifteenth chapter

of Exodus.---Such also was the Miracle, with which God crowned one of Joshua's victories; as related in the tenth chapter of the book bearing his name. Such again, is that exhibited by Elijah, in the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings, for the reformation of Ahab, and of the idolatrous Israelites.---Whereto I might subjoin several others, recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But, to proceed;

I mean this only as a popular definition of Miracles; which, without pretending to philosophical accuracy, may be sufficiently accurate for our present purpose.

II. Let me, in the second place, turn your thoughts to the qualities, that distinguish the Miracles, of our Savior, and his Apostles.

Now the Miracles, wrought by our Blessed Master, were not merely works of wonder, in common with those abovementioned; but they were, almost always, works of mercy. They were not barely acts of power, but acts of goodness likewise. They were, accordingly, exercised upon the bodies of men; and were employed, in healing the  
sick,

sick, curing the lame, cleansing lepers, feeding the hungry, giving sight to the blind.

Moreover, these Miracles were not wrought clandestinely, or in secret corners; like deeds, that shun the light; but before multitudes of people; in synagogues, and places of public resort. And the persons, on whom Christ performed them, were no strangers, or fictitious invalids; but inhabitants of the country; well known by the spectators, to have long laboured under their respective diseases.

Again. These cures were accomplished, in an instant of time; by a word-speaking; without any of the tedious, painful remedies, so universally, but often so unsuccessfully, applied by Men, on the like occasions.

Lastly, which adds infinite weight to the foregoing remarks, the patients, upon whom such cures were conferred, and who found themselves restored from their several disorders to sound health, could entertain no possible doubt concerning the reality of these Miracles; and were incontestable evidences in their behalf, to all indifferent people.

Our Savior's Miracle at the marriage-feast



feast in Cana of Gallilee, recorded in the second chapter of this same Gospel, may be deemed, perhaps, an exception to what I am here saying. Since it was, certainly, not an act of beneficence; nor, seemingly, of any great utility.--- With regard to its utility, you will change your opinion, when you recollect, that, though it was not indeed an act of Divine Mercy, it was a signal act of Divine Power; and, being our Lord's first Miracle, wrought in so public a manner, as well as on so popular an occasion, was admirably calculated to produce, and could not fail to produce, its intended effect---of "manifesting forth his Glory, "and causing his Disciples to believe on "him."

Some ignorant, ill-natured cavils, have likewise been started, against the Miracle mentioned in the eighth chapter of St. Matthew, as also by St. Mark and St. Luke: ---Where our Savior, after having cast out the Devils from the possessed Men, suffered them to enter into an herd of Swine; which ran immediately and drowned themselves in the neighbouring lake.

Now men, who read the Scriptures, as all  
men

men ought to do, with judgment and humility, think this Miracle answered an excellent purpose. For it was a means of demonstrating to the whole multitude present, Christ's sovereign authority over those evil spirits; that, as they themselves confessed, he could either command them to go, or restrain them from going, whithersoever he pleased.

In a word. Though to heal mens bodily infirmities, and to relieve their immediate distresses, was indeed one object of the Christian Miracles; it was far from being their sole, or even their main, design; as I hope will afterwards more fully appear.

The preceding observations concerning the Miracles performed by our Lord himself, are equally applicable to the Miracles recorded in the acts, or referred to in the epistles, as performed by his Apostles and first preachers of his Gospel.

But I must not forget one property, whereby the Miracles wrought by Christ himself, eminently surpass those mentioned in Scripture, as wrought by any other Holy Persons; by the Apostles, by Moses,  
by

by the Jewish Prophets. The difference is this---The Miracles of our Lord, were his own proper work; as the Son of God, as partaker of the Divine Omnipotence. Those ascribed to other persons, were not Their Acts. They were not the real, but the merely nominal, the merely visible, agents. They could no more, by any ability of their own, alter, or counteract, the stated laws of nature, than You can. This can be done by God alone; or by the sole heir of his Supreme Perfections.---It is an essential character of Miracles, as I told you when I defined them, that 'the performance of 'them, infinitely exceeds all human power.' Which, if duly attended to, would have prevented numberless forgeries, that have been wickedly imposed, upon the credulous, and the thoughtless.

III. Thus much, for the Miracles wrought by our Heavenly Master. If we, next, examine his teaching, and conversations; we shall find his doctrines to be doctrines of mercy, as his works were works of mercy.

The Redemption and Salvation of mankind :

kind: Repentance and Reformation, on our part: God's gracious offer of forgiveness, to all who Would repent: The love and fear of our common Creator: Universal justice, and benevolence, to each other: Temperance and sobriety, moderation and contentment, in the use of all worldly things---these are the doctrines, constantly, as well as most earnestly inculcated, both by Christ himself, and by every one of his Apostles.

I have had so frequent occasions of enlarging upon these doctrines; upon their importance, even to Mens Present welfare; upon their superiority to any, that were professed, or taught, in the Heathen world; that I need say nothing here, in proof of this point.

I shall only add therefore, as another quality, peculiar to the Scripture-morals, that they do not consist, like the lectures of human moralists, in crabbed rules, or formal systems, of Ethicks (which can afford no possible instruction to the bulk of mankind, because utterly unintelligible to all inferior people) but they consist in short precepts, that



that are easily learnt, and as easily remembered : That are intuitively clear, and carry their own evidence along with them : That convey the noblest truths, the sublimest duties, under the most familiar language ; and contain all the force of the deepest reasoning, without any of its difficulty, or obscurity.

This second excellency too of the Christian morality, I have repeatedly remarked to you, on various occasions ; and shall not now minutely insist upon it. I will just mention, as a perfect specimen of what I mean, that universal law of manners, “ what-soever ye would that men should do to “ You, do Ye even so to Them.” Which, in one brief sentence that is intelligible by every creature, comprehends the substance of all the duties we owe to each other.

IV. The fourth and last thing I proposed, was ; to shew you, how the doctrine of our Lord is confirmed by his Miracles ; how the latter give a great additional authority to the former ; and how both together, demonstrate beyond exception, that he was the true Messiah, or that his Religion came from God.

Our

Our Savior's doctrine, though most admirable in itself, and unspeakably preferable to all the morality that ever was published to men before, yet, if unsupported by Miracles, would certainly have passed for nothing more than human doctrine: and its author would have been considered as nothing more than a man, of extraordinary wisdom, and virtue. For though no such eminent teacher had hitherto appeared in the world, it was extremely easy to suppose that such a one had Then appeared. All this, I say, might easily be supposed, nay would actually have been supposed, and universally believed too, if the Gospel had not been accompanied with Miracles.

In short. The mere good qualities of any doctrine, alone, or by themselves, can never prove its Divine origin. They can prove nothing further, than the sound understanding, and the honest intention, of the person that preaches it. Nor is there the smallest absurdity in imagining, that 'a  
' brave, benevolent man, fully persuaded of  
' the beneficial tendency of such a doctrine,  
' might, without any express commission  
' from

‘ from Heaven, endure persecution even to death, for the sake, and in the defence, of it’---Thousands of men are every day encountering dangers, and hazarding their lives, in infinitely less meritorious causes !

But, if you change the question ; if you suppose this same excellent doctrine to be attended with powers, which plainly surpass the powers of Man ; and by which a variety of works are performed, totally above the reach of Man ; the case will now be exceedingly altered, and the inference will be undeniable---that ‘ some Being greatly superior to Man, either is the founder of this doctrine, or at least exerts himself on its behalf, in order to gain it credit in the opinions of men, and to establish it in the world.’

There was one of the few candid people among the leading Jews in our Savior’s time, who seems to have thoroughly understood the force of this argument ; and, in the third chapter of this Gospel by St. John, has very frankly declared his sense of it. “ Rabbi,” says he to our Heavenly Master, we Know that thou art a Teacher  
“ come

"come from God. For no man can do  
 "these Miracles which thou doest, except  
 "God be with him." So our Savior him-  
 self, in the fifteenth chapter, speaking about  
 his countrymen, and their invincible infide-  
 lity, says ; "if I had not done among them  
 "the Works, which no other man did; they  
 "had not had sin. But now" (as I Have  
 done such works) "there is no cloke for  
 "their sin."

It is curious to observe the method, which  
 these unaccountable Jews took, to evade  
 this argument ; and which no sophistry up-  
 on earth, except their own, could ever have  
 devised. I mean, the ascribing our Lord's  
 Miracles, to a confederacy with infernal spi-  
 rits ; by the help of whose magic, they as-  
 serted he performed them. "This Fellow  
 "casteth out Devils, through Beelzebub,  
 "the prince of the Devils." Which was  
 supposing Satan to act as foolishly, as They  
 talked. It was supposing him to be bent,  
 upon his own ruin ; to countenance a Re-  
 ligion, that blasted all his projects ; a Re-  
 ligion, that proclaimed the Redemption of  
 Man, whom He had seduced and undone ; a  
 Religion,



Religion, that suppresses every vice, which he wishes to promote; and inforces every virtue, which he utterly abhors!

You see therefore, to what wretched shifts these men were reduced! They did not pretend to deny, or even to dispute, the reality of the Miracles; but framed an excuse for rejecting them, of all others the most ridiculous they could possibly invent, the most certain to betray the weakness of their cause!

Our Savior's reply to these perverse creatures, in the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, is so clear, as well as so strong; that, one would think, it must have silenced them for ever! "Every Kingdom," says our Lord, "that is divided against itself, cometh to desolation. And every house, or city, that is divided against itself, falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself" (if, contrary to your own idea of his consummate subtlety, he sides with his enemies to dethrone Himself) "how shall His Kingdom stand?"

Let me only observe further, that this inflexible hardness of heart, which made these people

people revile the Christian Miracles, and blaspheme the Divine Spirit who wrought them, by ascribing them to the Spirit of falsehood and imposture, is that "sin against the Holy Ghost," which was past all cure; and on which, accordingly, Christ pronounced, in the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, that "it should never be forgiven; neither in the present world, nor in the next."

Do not therefore mistake this awful sentence, as being too severe; or as a reflection, on the mercy of your judge. For, if Divine goodness and Divine power united, cannot convince or reclaim men; such men defeat the whole grace of God. They sin, against their last remedy; are incapable of conviction, that is of repentance, and consequently of pardon.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain the text, and to shew you the full meaning of our Savior's declaration---that "the Works which he did in his Father's Name, bear Witness of Him."

The view I had, when I chose this subject, was; to inform you, upon what foundation our faith in Christ, our belief of his

Gospel, is built---' upon the excellence of ' his doctrine, seconded and supported by ' his Miracles.' The former proves, that his Religion might come, or was worthy to come, from God : the latter proves, that it actually did come from him : While both together, form an evidence in its favor, more than sufficient to satisfy every docile, ingenuous, mind. And this is the temper of mind, which alone can constitute a real Christian, or even a tolerable member of civil society. To be conceited of his own understanding, fond of throwing contempt upon the things and persons he ought to reverence, is the talent of every ignorant, profligate, mortal : To be " meek and lowly " in heart," is the character of the All-wise, the Ever-blessed, Jesus !

I shall conclude with praying, that what I have advanced, may produce the desired effect ; that it may establish you, in the truth of the Gospel ; and may enable you to " give an answer to every man, who asketh you a Reason of the hope that is in " you."

To the King Eternal.

S E R M O N XXIX.

# S E R M O N XXIX.

JOHN x. 25.

*The Works that I do in my Father's Name,  
They bear Witness of Me.*

**W**HEN I discoursed upon these words,  
at our last meeting; I undertook to  
shew you, what are the works, which our Sa-  
vior here says he did in his Father's Name  
---Not His virtuous actions, or his moral  
works, but his miraculous ones.

I also pointed out the nature of Miracles,  
in general; and the character of mercy to



mankind, that distinguishes almost all the Miracles wrought by our Lord, or his Apostles: The singular excellency of their doctrine, and the irresistible evidence which it receives from their Miracles.

I chose this text, as I then told you, with a view of explaining the Faith we profess; of informing you upon what foundation our hope in Christ, or our belief in his Gospel, is built---‘upon the internal goodness of his precepts, and the external proofs of his Divine Power.’

But there are many remarks proper to this subject, and to the power of working Miracles; which will give you a further insight into them; and will guard you against the wrong notions that have been conceived about them, as well as the various impositions that have been practised upon the world, by men pretending to work them.

These observations therefore, which I only just lightly touched upon in my first sermon, I shall now set before you, in the clearest and most satisfactory manner I am able.

I. As your grand preservative, against all human artifices, or magical deceits; let me

me forewarn you, that 'No Miracle can be wrought, either by Almighty God himself, or by any agent acting under his direction, in behalf of any vicious or immoral doctrine.'---To assert the contrary, would be to make God, if not the Father, at least the patron and promoter, of evil: Which is far worse, than downright Atheism. You had infinitely better affirm, that 'there is no God at all;' than that 'He employs himself in devising and executing, what will be injurious to the welfare of his rational creatures.'

Again. It is utterly un-imaginable, that 'God ever alters the regular, stated course of his Providence, not only for wicked purposes, but even for frivolous, or trifling, ones.'---As the former supposition makes him an evil, this latter makes him a foolish, Governor; and, though not quite so daring, not quite so profane, as the other, is equally absurd, equally impossible to be admitted.

The establishment of Christianity and its excellent morals among men, that it might reform them here, and save them hereafter, was a great, a noble, object; worthy for

which the author of nature should suspend or supersede her usual operations ; in order to excite the attention of the hearers, to give them a just veneration for what our Blessed Lord and his Apostles were preaching.

This then I shall without scruple lay down as a first, a fundamental, principle ; that ‘ God never did, nor ever will,’ and I might add never can, ‘ work a Miracle ; ‘ with an intention of supporting any doctrine, that is senseless, useless, or hurtful to ‘ mankind.’

Hence it follows, 2dly, that ‘ all Miracles pretended to have been wrought in ‘ confirmation of any such doctrine, are false ; ‘ that they ought to be rejected, as arrant ‘ frauds, and impostures.’

Since God, as I this moment observed to you, cannot himself work Miracles in behalf of wicked doctrines ; if any Miracles Are wrought in their behalf, such Miracles must be wrought by wicked spirits---those antient Apostates from truth, and Righteousness.

That God Has suffered, and may again whenever he pleases suffer, evil spirits to tempt

tempt mankind, by this as well as by other diabolical artifices, no Christian believer can deny. He suffered them, by miraculously entering into the serpent, to seduce our first parents; and, by inspiring false Prophets, to deceive the Israelites. But that he indulges these malevolent Beings with such a permission at large (since, without His Permission, they cannot possibly work any Miracle) is improbable, in the very highest degree.

One thing, however, amidst all our doubts, is absolutely certain---that 'the vast majority of what have passed under the title of Miracles, were really no Miracles at all; were wrought, neither by good, nor by evil, spirits; but were the mere juggling tricks of rascally Men, to abuse the credulity of ignorant and simple ones, to serve their own sordid worldly purposes.'

---For hardly any of you, I presume, can want to be told, that Religion itself is far from having "escaped the corruptions of world;" that it has been held out as a screen, to the foulest crimes; and has been employed by people of all professions, as the

right old sch. K k 4 instrument



instrument of unnumbered knaveries and cruelties upon each other.

3. Whence you clearly see in the third place, what opinion we are to entertain concerning the Miracles so common for many ages, throughout all popish countries; but which, God be thanked, since the glorious light of the Reformation appeared, are considerably declined, both in their credit, and their number.

The very Intent of working these Miracles, is alone sufficient to condemn them. For they are wrought, not to establish the pure, primitive doctrines, of Christianity; which were already fully and everlastingly established. No! They are performed at graves and tombs, by the bones, the dust, and precious reliques, of departed Saints. Their design is, to magnify the authority of the Church, who can create what Saints She pleases: To blind the eyes of the vulgar: To keep the populace in peaceable slavery, in a profound veneration for the doctrines which She has bound upon them.

---‘ The infallibility of the Pope---‘ the dominion of the Priesthood, over the ‘ consciences of the people---the sole right  
‘ of

\* of the clergy, to read the Scriptures---  
 \* the necessity that the laity should renounce  
 \* all use of reason in matters of religion,  
 \* and tamely swallow these with sundry articles of the like import.

Which Monstrous tenets, not only have not the smallest connection with the Gospel of Christ; but are directly repugnant to it, for ever incompatible with it! The spirit of Christianity, is benevolence and humility: The genius of these doctrines, is pride and oppression.

Whether therefore the same Divine hand which wrought the Christian Miracles, works the Popish ones also; or whether the latter be not palpable forgeries, and an audacious insult upon God as well as man; a very little reflection, a very moderate acquaintance with the New Testament, will qualify you to determine.

I shall only repeat what I hinted, in part, just now; namely, that all such Miracles (if nothing worse could be said about them) are entirely needless and impertinent: Because the Gospel, being founded long before on the incontestable Miracles of Christ  
 and

and his Apostles, could consequently want no further assistance from the succeeding pastors of his flock, than to enforce its precepts, by affectionate exhortations, and virtuous examples!

4thly. Since Popish Miracles have all along been found so manifestly void of truth; a question has arisen among learned, inquisitive men; 'until what period did Miracles actually continue, in the Christian Church? To what persons was the power of working them confined? And when was that power finally withdrawn?'

The plain general answer is---'they continued in the hands of proper persons, till they had sufficiently spread the reputation of Christianity, and had enabled it to make its future progress without them.' But whether that end was fully accomplished, during the lives of the Apostles; or whether there were not many particular, urgent occasions for them, afterwards; I cannot take upon me, to decide: nor do I think it of any great importance, to Be decided. This, however, I believe, is acknowledged, by all unprejudiced inquirers---that 'false Miracles,

'cles, as well as other falsehoods of divers kinds, began exceeding early to make their appearance in the Christian world.' So that, for a single genuine Miracle, after the days of the Apostles ; there, in all probability, were spurious ones, to a considerable amount. Which early corruptions, opened a way for, and gradually introduced, the lying wonders, the tyrannical doctrines, the abominable nonsense, of popery.

It is extremely obvious to reflect here, how prone men have been, in every age of the Gospel, to forge Miracles, to patch up Creeds, to invent Superstitious Ceremonies of Worship, to rely upon the intercession of imaginary Saints ; to do in short, and to contrive any thing, rather than obey the moral precepts of their Savior, or live and act like true believers !

Indeed the case is pretty much the same, in other instances, beside religion ; in the conduct of common, daily life. How often do you see people, perversely running into visionary schemes of profit, or of pleasure ; and forsaking the plain, direct road, that would lead them to both ! But,

5thly. Ano-



5thly. Another remark, very just in itself, as well as very pertinent to the subject, is; that ‘a too frequent repetition of ‘Miracles, would destroy their effect, and ‘almost their nature: The making them ‘cheap, by displaying them for every trivial ‘cause, would utterly degrade, and debase ‘them.’ Familiarity, where it does not beget contempt, never fails to lessen veneration. If you could see Miracles, even real Miracles, performed every day; they would become, in event, no Miracles at all: They would neither excite your wonder, nor strengthen your faith.

This is a consequence, which the coiners and multipliers of Miracles since the primitive days, either did not foresee, or paid no regard to. It is also one, among other wise reasons, why our Lord and his Apostles, were never ostentatious in exhibiting their miraculous powers; to amuse the gaping multitude; or to gratify the insolent, wanton curiosity, of the Scribes and Pharisees “---Master, we would see a Sign from thee.” No! They did not “cast pearls “before swine.” They reserved these extraordinary

traordinary works, for more worthy occasions; when they would answer all the popular purposes, and at the same time would do essential credit to the persons who wrought them, essential service to the cause of Christianity.

6thly. There is one Miracle, that must by no means pass without notice, and that ought indeed to have been mentioned in my former discourse.---The Miracle I mean, is our Lord's Resurrection: Which I cannot so properly call one of His Miracles, because he himself was the Subject of it; but which crowned all his Miracles, and gave the finishing attestation to the truth of his doctrine.

Had it been possible for Christ to have remained in the grave, or in a state of death; and had the miraculous powers, which attended him during his life, died along with him; Christianity would most manifestly have failed, both in its end, and its evidence. For our Savior himself had preached his Gospel to the Jews only, and to Them with but little effect. The main business of his Commission, to instruct and enlighten

lighten the Gentiles, was not even begun. That task was ordained for his Apostles, or select Disciples; who were to "teach all nations;" to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

How, then, could those poor men, destitute of their leader, violently deprived of his Divine assistance, have ever accomplished that arduous work; against all the opposition they must encounter, amidst all the perils with which they were surrounded!

The argument, in few words, stands thus  
 ---' if Christ himself found it so difficult,  
 ' to convert the single Jewish nation, With  
 ' the help of Miracles; how should these  
 ' far inferior agents, possibly convert a variety of Heathen Nations, Without that  
 ' help!'

But, if you admit what the Sacred History declares; that 'the Apostles were  
 ' convinced of their Master's Resurrection,  
 ' by the testimony of all their senses; that  
 ' they repeatedly saw him, repeatedly conversed with him, after he was risen; and  
 ' actually received from him a large addition  
 ' to the Supernatural Powers he had before  
 ' conferred

'conferred on them;---Then, I say, their resolution in preaching his Gospel, and the success that followed it, become perfectly clear, perfectly easy to be accounted for. Christ was their patron and guardian, in Heaven. He strengthened them continually, with the comfort of the Holy Spirit. He "gave them a mouth and wisdom, which "all their adversaries were unable to gain-  
"say, or to resist."

Thus I think it is strikingly evident, that our Lord's Resurrection was the conclusive, the decisive, Work: Without which, all his former works would have been ineffectual, and insufficient to "Bear Witness "of Him:---First, because, had he continued under the dominion of Death; he could not be the Christ, the immortal son of God:---Secondly, because he expressly affirmed, that "He should rise again;" not to his Disciples only, but to the Jews at large; and consequently, if he had Not risen, must have proved himself a Deceiver: Thirdly, because, had he perished upon the cross, and all his miraculous powers perished with him; his Religion could



could have made no further progress: Its friends would have been totally disheartened: The unbelieving Jews, its bitter enemies, would have triumphed over it: and it must have almost instantly sunk, for want of support, under their persecution.

Hence you find, in the first four chapters of the Acts, as well as throughout the whole book, that the Apostles made this grand Miracle the basis, both of all their doctrine, and of all their conduct. They protested, with one voice, that ‘ they were ‘ eye-witnesses of this great fact; that, in ‘ consequence of it, they were commanded, ‘ by Divine authority, to preach repentance, ‘ and remission of sins, in the name of ‘ Christ, among all nations.---To this assertion they adhered, unshaken, and untrifled; defying all opposition, whether from Jews, or Gentiles. They wrought Miracles, to verify it. They laid down their lives, to defend it!

Those pathetic words of St. Paul, in his farewell speech to the Ephesians, Acts the twentieth, are an eternal monument of his fidelity,

fidelity, and zeal for the Gospel! "And  
 "now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit  
 "unto Jerusalem; not knowing the things  
 "that shall befall me there; save that the  
 "Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying  
 "that bonds and afflictions abide me. But  
 "none of these things move me. Neither  
 "count I my life dear unto myself; so that  
 "I may finish my course with joy; and  
 "the ministry, which I have received  
 "from the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gos-  
 "pel of the Grace of God. And now I  
 "know that all ye, among whom I have  
 "gone preaching the kingdom of God,  
 "shall see my face no more. Wherefore I  
 "take you to record this day, that I am pure  
 "from the blood of all men"---"I thus pub-  
 "licly appeal to your own selves, that no  
 "man's ignorance of the Gospel, or his con-  
 "tempt of it, can be laid to My charge"---  
 "For I have not shunned to declare unto  
 "you the whole counsel of God."---If the  
 man who spoke these affectionate words, was  
 capable of being an hypocrite, and a decei-  
 ver; where shall we find honesty, or sinc-  
 erity, upon earth?

The substance of what I have Here said in proof of our Lord's Resurrection, you may possibly remember to have heard from me, upon that particular occasion. But I nevertheless judge it absolutely necessary to be urged, upon the present subject; with which it has the strictest connection. Any discourse concerning the Miracles recorded in the New Testament, that does not take due notice of the capital Miracle of all, is manifestly imperfect, and defective.

The inference we should draw from the whole of what has passed, or the lesson we should learn from it, is briefly this:---That all these Miracles were wrought, all these wonders done and suffered, by Christ and his Apostles; for our Benefit indeed, but on the following express Condition; that, if ever we hope to Reap this benefit, if ever we hope to rise from the grave as our Lord has done before us, and to gain admittance into Heaven, we must begin Now to "have our conversation in Heaven:" We must wean our affections from earthly pleasures, and fix them upon the joys that are above: We must continually bear in mind, and conscientiously

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entiously endeavor to perform, the moral duties which he has enjoined us ; to keep ourselves pure from the contagion of vice, and to attain the virtues of a godly life.

Which that we may all do.---



continually endeavor to perform the moral duties which he has enjoined us, to keep ourselves pure from the contagion of vice, and to attain the virtues of a goodly life.

7 DE 61

It is the duty of every Christian to be diligent in the study of the scriptures, and to be conversant with the word of God. The scriptures are the foundation of our faith, and the rule of our life. We must therefore study them with care and attention, that we may be able to stand firm in the truth, and to be able to give an account of our faith and life to God and man.

The first step in the study of the scriptures is to read them with understanding. We must not read them as we read a book of fiction, but as we read a book of truth. We must seek to understand the meaning of the words, and the spirit of the law. We must also seek to understand the will of God, and the way of salvation. The second step is to meditate on the scriptures. We must not only read them, but we must also think about them. We must consider the things which are written in them, and how they apply to our lives. We must seek to find the truth in the scriptures, and to live by that truth. The third step is to pray. We must not only read and meditate on the scriptures, but we must also pray to God for his help and guidance. We must seek to be in communion with God, and to have his will done in us and in the world.

## S E R M O N XXX.

MATTHEW, XIX. 17.

*If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.*

**T**HE words which I have now read to you, are an answer given by our Heavenly Instructor, to a question that had been proposed to him by one of the Jews, in the preceding verse : " Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ? " Whereunto our Lord replies, " If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. "

The phrase of "entering into Life," plainly means the same with "having eternal Life," in the sixteenth verse. And both of them signify, the being for ever happy in Heaven, or in that future state of existence, which is eminently stiled life, and eternal life, to distinguish it from the present transitory life, which we live in the flesh, subject to innumerable changes, to inevitable death.

By "Keeping the Commandments" (as our Savior himself expressly interprets it to the Jew, in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses) we are to understand, the observance of the moral law, or the practice of the great moral duties, prescribed to men by Moses, by right reason, by all sound and saving Religion: "---Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet, honor thy father and thy mother."

The text, introduced with this short necessary preface, I think will open a way for some important reflections, which may help to rectify many unhappy errors, that have

have prevailed, and I am sorry to say do still sadly prevail, among those who currently pass for Christian people.

Then. You cannot but remark the strange absurdity of those persons, who (as far as we may judge from their conduct) fancy they shall gain admittance into Heaven, by the mere observance of a few outward rites, of a few external offices, in Religion.

For I beg you will take special notice, that our Lord does not say to the Jew, 'if thou wilt enter into Life, do not omit to fast constantly twice, in every week. Take care to offer an abundance of Sacrifice. Be sure, like your Scribes and Pharisees, to have a plenty of texts of Scripture, hung round the borders of your garment, to shew how pious you are. Be exact, in keeping the Passover, and every other festival appointed by the law.

Neither this, I say, nor any thing resembling it, is the advice given by our Blessed Master: But, "if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments:" Or, as it is more distinctly expressed in a similar passage



passage in the tenth chapter of St. Luke, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." That is, when put into our more common stile of language, "Be a sincerely devout, a morally virtuous and upright, man." readily. You cannot, in the next place, forbear remarking the no less wonderful absurdity of those, who trust that they shall be received into Heaven, or shall "enter into Life," by one or more of the following pretensions. By the virtue of an implicit, inexplicable, kind of faith. By the operation of Divine irresistible grace. By the benefits of the death and satisfaction of Christ. By the redemption he has obtained, and the atonement he has made, for them. By God's having predestinated them to eternal life, before the foundation of the world. Who in short, by these or any other vain excuses, profanely lay the work of their Salvation entirely upon their Savior, taking a very little or no part of it, upon themselves.

I hope you do not imagine, that such enthusiasts (or whatever name they properly deserve) are nothing but the creatures of my

my fancy. All history assures you, that they have existed, more or less, in every century, in every age, of the Gospel. Nay, ye yourselves well know, that they not barely exist, but seem to be increasing with great rapidity, in your own country, at this very day. The melancholy fact is, that, in this profligate nation, many people have no Religion at all; while the people I point at, profess a Religion of so corrupt a sort, as to be full as bad, or even worse than none.

Now here again, be pleased to observe! Our Lord does not say to the Jew, 'if you would enter into Life, be a strenuous champion for Faith; though you have hardly the smallest idea, what that word signifies. Rely wholly upon my merits; as of absolute, unconditional, influence to save you. Possess yourself with a strong persuasion, that, whatever becomes of the rest of the world; you, and your party, are in the blessed number of God's elect; that you feel the motions of his Spirit within you, and an internal conviction that you are irreversibly predestinated to everlasting happiness in Heaven.'

This

This likewise, I say, is not our Savior's counsel to the Jew. God forbid, that it should ! But, " if thou wilt enter into life, " keep the Commandments : " That is (as the two next verses demonstrate, and as I have already proved to you beyond denial) heartily endeavor to fulfil the moral and religious precepts, which God has enjoined you in the two tables of the law. Do the utmost you can, to save yourself : And then both you, and your work, will be sure to prosper.

This is our Master's doctrine, in the text ; and the single doctrine that is worthy, either of him to teach, or of any human creatures to receive. Thirdly, however. That I may prevent the text itself, as well as my reflections upon it, from being captiously perverted, or ignorantly misunderstood ; let me add, that though the observance of the moral part of Christianity, is the grand affair ; yet it by no means precludes the observance of the necessary forms, or of the ritual part. Much less does it preclude the efficacy of the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ. With

With regard to the forms of Religion, our Lord's own rule is the Christian's standard: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone." Some matters of ceremony, are not merely useful, but indispensably needful; and, as such, claim to be carefully observed. Universal custom, universal experience shews, that the world cannot be governed, that no due order or decorum can be preserved, without the help of them; either in Religion; in public, or even in common, life.

With respect to the satisfaction, or the merits, of Christ; They are essentially requisite, to supply the defects of human virtue, and to atone for our repented sins. "In many things," says St. James, "we all offend." No man's obedience to the Divine Laws is so exact, as to be able to save him, without some propitiation, or without some special act of Divine Mercy. Nor can the strictest repentance possibly destroy the reality of sins, actually and wilfully committed.---Hence therefore you see,

4thly, That moral and ceremonial services should go hand in hand, should be discharged



charged together;—that faith and works should evermore co-operate, to the forming of a Christian, and to the saving of his soul. As you must not rely, confidently and solely, upon the atonement made by your Savior; so neither must you rely, confidently and solely, upon your own imperfect works; but must endeavor to render those works as perfect as you can; and be thankful to God, for graciously accepting them, through the mediation of Christ, with all their imperfections.

By the ritual or ceremonial part of Christianity, you will easily understand me to mean, 'the rites of Baptism, and of the 'Lord's Supper;' with the several forms that are necessary to regulate the religious assemblies of Christian people, and their public worship of Almighty God.

Let me, then, give you this earnest caution:—Never to separate the different branches of Religion from each other (the doing which, always has been, and for ever will be, the bane of Christianity) but to consider them as different means, conducing to the accomplishment of one great end.

' tue

“ true is the path, that leads to Life. And a proper attention to the externals of godliness, universally tends to make men virtuous.” — If this be not a true state of the case, and a fair representation of the obligations of Religion; I am sure that I am utterly unable to give one, or so much as to conceive how it can be given.

5thly. It may seem perhaps, upon a hasty view of the following part of our Lord's conversation with the Jew, in the twenty-first verse; that “ He thought even the most punctual performance of the moral precepts of the Divine Law, insufficient to save a man.” But, upon examining the matter a little more closely, we shall soon discover the falsity of such an opinion.

If the Jew had been contented with declaring, that “ he had kept the Commandments from his youth;” our Savior could not but have approved so blameless a conduct. But, when he insisted upon knowing, “ what he wanted further;” Then our Lord replies, “ if thou wilt be perfect” (if you will complete your character, which is already a good one) “ tell that thou hast, and  
“ give

"give to the poor, and come, and follow Me." Whereupon let me remark,

That the man, by having kept the Commandments from his childhood, had fulfilled the condition of "Entering into Life." Consequently, though he did not comply with the additional demand of 'giving away' his estate, and following Christ; yet his strict observance of God's moral law, undoubtedly rendered him capable of Salvation. This second demand, was no part of the terms, proposed to him by our Master; but was entirely brought upon him, by his own inquisitive curiosity. At the same time, I allow, nay I certainly know, that, if he Had complied with it, both his merit, and his reward, would have been exceedingly enhanced. He would Then have been perfect, both as a man, and as a Christian; which is the highest of human perfection.

But, moreover, to remove the whole difficulty at once; this precept, of 'distributing all his goods among the poor, and becoming a follower of Christ,' was, in its very nature, a confined, a partial, precept; impossible to be extended beyond those Jews, who

who were our Lord's cotemporaries. For it is impossible that We, or any other men since Christ left the world, can be his followers in the literal sense, or be his personal attendants.

Further, still. Even of such Jews, as most firmly believed on him, only a very small number could be his constant followers, his constant companions. The vast majority, though ever so faithful Disciples, must inevitably have been engaged, for the greater part of their time, in sundry other employments. Accordingly you find, that he had in fact, but twelve select, twelve chosen, Apostles; as his inseparable attendants. The rest accompanied him, occasionally only; so often, and so long, as to be duly instructed in the things which he taught.---All this seems so strikingly clear, that I shall not weary your patience, by attempting to prove it.

The inference is equally clear; namely, that the first precept, "If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments," is a universal precept; applicable to all times, to all Christians, whatsoever. The second precept, "give away your whole substance,"  
"and



"and come and follow Me," was a temporary, as well as a local, one; limited to the days of our Savior's life; to the men of the Jewish nation; and practicable by a few only, even of Them.

Thus you may collect from this, as from various other texts and subjects, how necessary is good common sense, an unprejudiced use of reason, a competent knowledge of the language and history of the New Testament, in order to the forming a just judgment, about either the doctrines, or the precepts, of Christianity. Such an use of reason, and the attainment of such knowledge, is the proper exercise, the noblest employment, of the human mind. It is the duty of every Christian, without exception; but more particularly of the men, that profess themselves ministers of Christ, or preachers of his Gospel.

What opinion then are we to entertain, of the modesty, or the honesty, of those illiterate impostors; who set themselves up for instructors of Christian people, without any one of these indispensable qualifications! who have had no liberal education; are

Masters

Masters of no acquired learning; and disclaim all assistance, from natural understanding! Where the affairs of Religion, are thus wretchedly conducted; where the blind thus miserably lead the blind; what Can be the consequence, but everlasting ignorance, and perversion of Scripture!

6. Lastly, therefore: If ever you are in doubt, and wish to be certainly informed, "what you must do to be saved," or "by what way you may enter into Life;" suffer no man, under pretence of being a teacher of the Gospel, to deceive you with senseless, or with subtle, words. Go to the fountain-head. Consult your Savior himself. Read, and remember, his own explicit answer, to the same inquiry---"if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments." "Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not cover another man's property. Honor your father, and your mother. Fear your God, and love your neighbor as yourself."

These virtues have no deceit, no darkness, in them. They are as free from guile, as the Divine Mind which enjoins them; and will infallibly save you. But, without them,

other matters will As infallibly betray you. Faith, the grace of God, the merits of Christ, all the means in short or helps to Salvation, absolutely lose their whole design, if your morals are depraved, if you repeatedly transgress essential duties.

On the other side, if you are generally regular in the performance of these duties, and heartily endeavor to be always so; rest assured, that you are in the safe road; and let not little errors, or single failures, dismay you. No man is perfect, nor does Christ expect he should be so. "In his Father's House, are many mansions;" suited to the cases of good men, of all abilities, of all degrees of desert. Only take care, to do your best: And then the Mercies of your Creator, joined to the merits of your Savior, will supply your real deficiencies, and pardon your real infirmities.

Once more. Have you, deliberately and repeatedly, broken the Commandments of God? Do not despair! Above all things, do not persist in your sins! Repent, and turn to Him, without delay! And then, according to his solemn promise throughout the Gospel, he will accept your Repentance through

through the mediatiou of Christ; will graciously permit you to "enter into Life." Call to mind the words, with which this service begins; and which you hear, or ought to hear, every Sabbath Day---"when  
 "the wicked man turneth away from his  
 "wickedness which he hath committed,  
 "and doeth that which is lawful and right;  
 "he shall save his soul alive."

I only add, that the exhortations, contained in this last section, are sincerely addressed in common to you all; without partiality, without distinction. The main rule is the same, for every rank, for every profession, of Christian People. "If you will  
 "enter into Life, keep the Commandments  
 "to the utmost of your power;" is the eternal law, and should be the continual guide, of all Christ's Disciples; from the prince upon the throne, to the lowest servant in his House, or the lowest subject in his Kingdom.---How then can I conclude more properly, than with 'Praying to God, that  
 'they may all unanimously and conscientiously follow it!'

To Him, only wise:



through the mediation of Christ will graciously permit you to "enter into life." Call to mind the words with which this service begins, and which you hear, or ought to hear, every Sabbath Day: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." I only add, that the exhortations contained in this last section are liberally addressed in common to you all; without particular, without distinction. The main rule is the same, for every man, for every profession, for Christian people. "If you will enter into life, keep the Commandments." "to the utmost of your power," is the eternal law, and should be the eternal guide of all Christ's Disciples. **13ED 7** upon the throne, to the lowest subject in his Kingdom, or the lowest subject in his Kingdom. How then can I counsel more properly than with "Trusting to God, that they may all unanimously and obediently follow him."

To those only who are called to follow him.